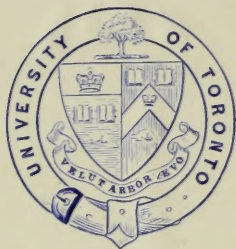
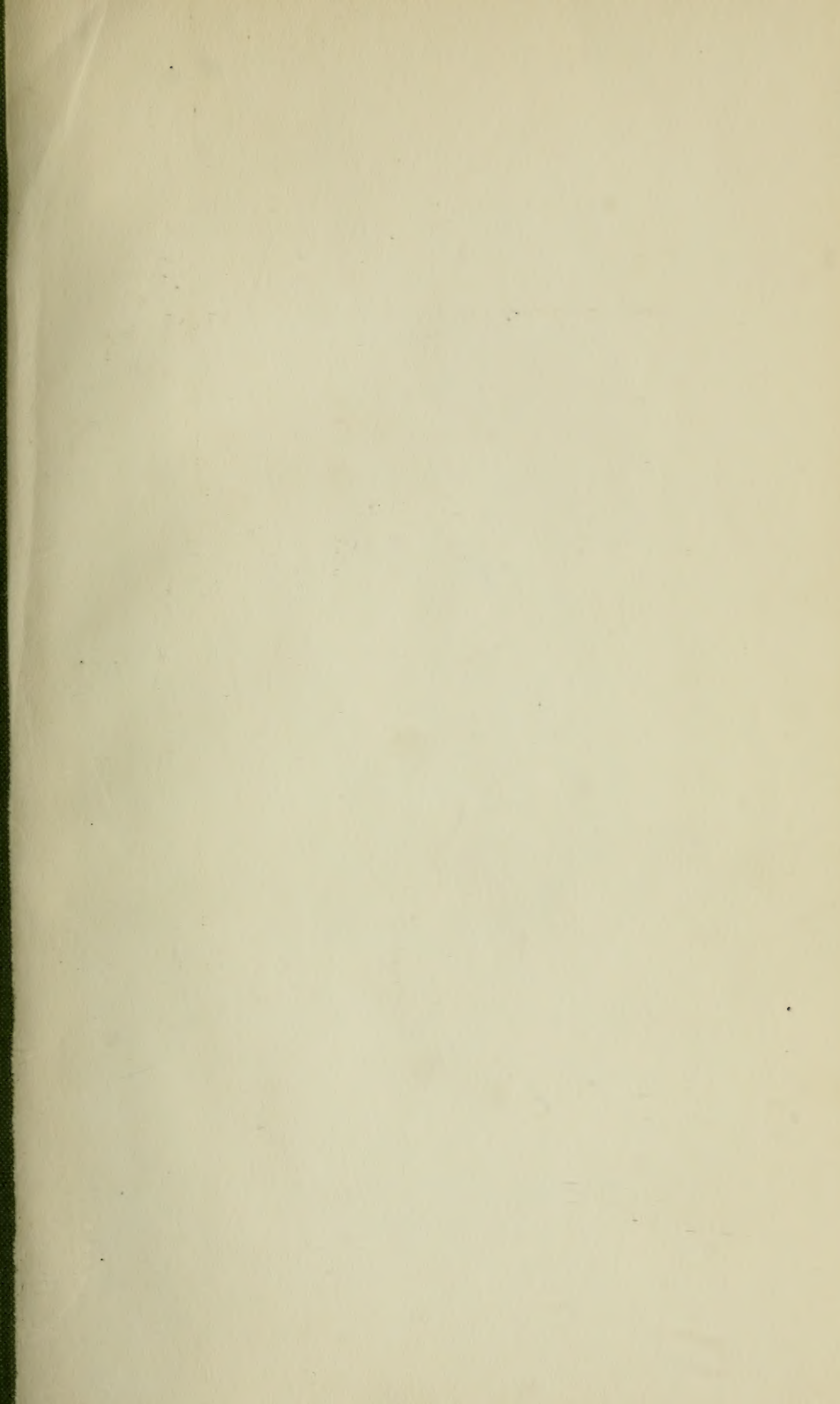
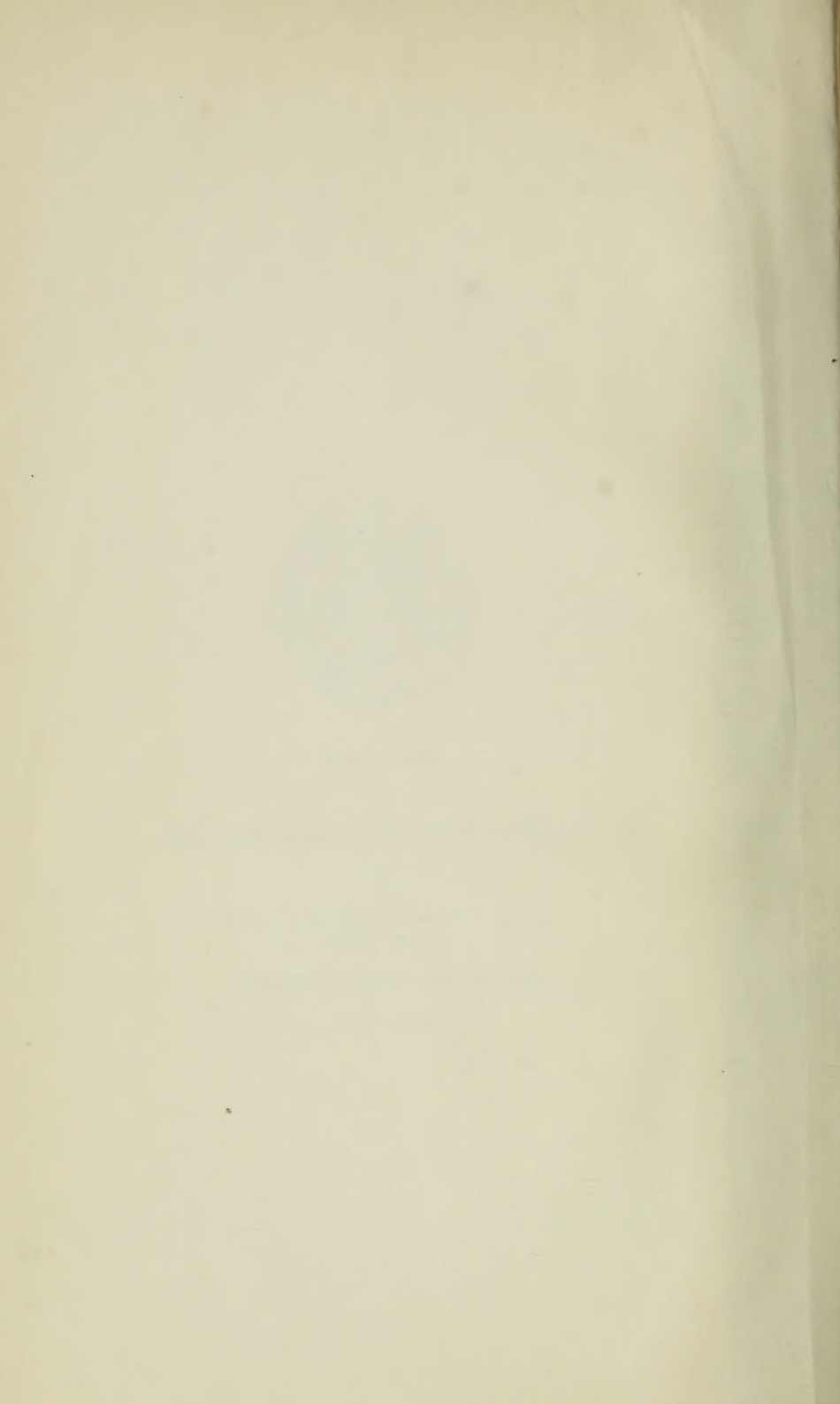


UNIV. OF  
TORONTO  
LIBRARY




Bequeathed  
to  
The University of Toronto Library  
by  
The late Maurice Hutton,  
M.A., LL.D.  
Principal of University College  
1901-1928









Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2010 with funding from  
University of Toronto



LGr  
H766  
.Es

A.

THE  
ILIAD AND ODYSSEY  
OF  
HOMER,

TRANSLATED  
BY  
WILLIAM SOTHEY;



ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESIGNS OF FLAXMAN.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

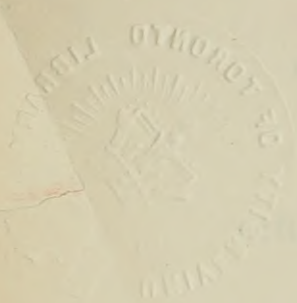
G. AND W. NICOL, PALL-MALL; J. MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

MDCCCXXXIII.

395094  
18.7.41

THE UNIVERSITY OF

ALBANY





THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XII.

THE THIRTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

The Phæacians convey Ulysses, while sleeping, to Ithaca. Minerva and Ulysses in the cave of the Nymphs, consult and plan the destruction of the suitors. The Goddess transforms Ulysses into a beggar.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XIII.

HE spake : and all in silent rapture hung  
On the enchantment of Ulysses' tongue :  
Then, thus the monarch :

‘ Since beneath my dome,

‘ My high-roof'd palace thou art haply come,  
‘ Tho' thou hast much endured, thou ne'er again  
‘ Shalt slow-returning wander o'er the main.  
‘ Ye, every chief, now to my word incline :  
‘ Ye, who here pledge the honorary wine,  
‘ And list the bard : already in the chest  
‘ Repose the fine-wrought gold, and many a vest,  
‘ All that your bounty, judges of the land,  
‘ Gave to my host, by mine, your king's command.  
‘ But—come, and, man by man, with one consent  
‘ A caldron, or large tripod now present.

‘ We, from the nation shall the gift regain :  
‘ ’Tis hard that one alone such charge sustain.’

He spake : they all approving gave assent,  
And to their separate homes each gladly went.  
And when the morn with light the world array’d,  
They to the ship their splendid gifts convey’d,  
The king himself in person went on board,  
And all in order ’neath the benches stored,  
That nought should e’er impede the oary sweep  
When the youths toil’d incumbent o’er the deep :  
The others on the rich repast intent,  
Forth to the monarch’s palace gladly went.

For them the king the sacrifice prepared  
Where all alike the hallow’d victim shared :  
He slew a bullock to Saturnian Jove  
Who girt with darkness rules all gods above.  
The thighs they burnt, and fuming from the fire  
Spread out the feast, and fed with keen desire.  
There, honour’d by the realm, the chiefs among  
The bard, Demodocus, at banquet sung.  
But oft Ulysses on the orb of day  
Bent his fix’d eye, impatient of delay,  
Fervently longing for the sun’s decline,  
That the new dawn might on his voyage shine.



As when the swain desirous of his food,  
Whose yoke all day the fallow has subdued,  
Sees with delight the westering sun retreat,  
While homeward turn'd slow plod his wearied feet,  
Thus glad, Ulysses saw the sun-beam rest,  
And thus Phæacia's king and chiefs address'd :

‘ Great monarch ! now, the due libations o’er,  
‘ Send me, uninjured, to my native shore :  
‘ Ye too farewell—all now is safe on board,  
‘ The ship in port prepared, and richly stored.  
‘ May gracious heaven to these, success impart—  
‘ And thou, most loved, thou partner of my heart !  
‘ Thee may I find, and those my friends, again  
‘ Safe and uninjured in my own domain.  
‘ And you who here abide, in chaste embrace  
‘ Glad those you spoused in youth, and bless your race :  
‘ May heaven each virtue in each breast encrease,  
‘ Nor aught disturb the realm’s perpetual peace !’—

He spake—and by Ulysses’ wisdom moved,  
Phæacia’s chiefs the monarch’s speech approved.

‘ Herald,’ Alcinoüs said, ‘ to all around  
‘ Administer the bowl with nectar crown’d,

‘ That, supplicating Jove, athwart the main  
‘ We guide our guest to his ancestral reign.’

Pontonoüs mix’d the wine, and duly gave  
Around to each in turn the hallowing wave,  
While, on their seats, to all in heaven adored,  
They pour’d the wine that crown’d the festive board :  
But, rising, in Arete’s hand, their guest  
A massive goblet placed, and thus address’d :

‘ Farewell ! O queen, be thou for ever bless’d,  
‘ Till age and death shall yield thee peaceful rest !  
‘ I go, but—thou here dwell in joy, and bring  
‘ Joy to thy realm and race and honour’d king !’

Ulysses spake, and from the palace went ;  
The king before his way a herald sent :  
He led him to the ship and peaceful main :  
While the queen sent three virgins of her train :  
One bore a mantle and a royal vest,  
One, fit to guard the gifts, a stately chest,  
Food and rich wine the third : and now on board  
The seamen in the ship the presents stored :  
But on the deck, astern, they smoothly spread  
Soft cloths and linen for Ulysses’ bed,

Still sleep inviting : there the hero pass'd,  
And on the couch his limbs in silence cast.  
The rope was loosen'd from the hollow'd stone,  
The rowers, in their seats, at signal shown,  
Bent o'er the banks, and all with equal stroke  
The flashing billows of the ocean broke,  
While on his lids a wakeless sweet repose  
Lay like still slumber on life's peaceful close.  
As when swift steeds, four-yoked, scour o'er the plain,  
And 'neath the lash, at once their vigour strain,  
Raise their light feet, and seem on air to sweep,  
Thus raised, the stern sprung bounding o'er the deep,  
While the dark billows purpling all behind  
With roar of waters fill'd the rushing wind.  
Fleetest of birds, on stretch of wing, in vain  
The falcon would o'ertake it on the main.  
Thus 'mid the parted waves the galley rode,  
That bore the man in wisdom like a god.  
He who such woes, such labours had sustain'd,  
Such storms confronted, and such battles gain'd,  
As if he ne'er had felt life's bitter blast,  
Lay in still sleep, forgetful of the past.  
When shone the star, fair harbinger of day  
That brightest beams before Aurora's ray,  
That time the ship, its prosperous voyage o'er,  
Had gain'd Ulysses' isle, and near'd the shore.

There is in Ithaca's sea-circled plain  
A harbour of the Ancient of the main,  
Phorcys. A craggy cliff, on either side  
O'er-beetling, breaks the gales, and stills the tide.  
Ships that within that port once entrance gain,  
Sleep motionless, and rest without a chain.  
Stretch'd o'er its head a broad-leaved olive bends,  
Near which a cave its grateful gloom extends,  
The Naiad's grot, where sacred to their band  
Their vessels, urns and stony vases stand.  
There the bees hive : and marble shafts arise,  
Where each pure Nymph her purple wonder plies,  
Weaving the web : there many a fountain flows,  
And two-fold gates the sacred grot enclose :  
This, to the north, by earthly footstep trod,  
That, to the south, yields entrance to the God,  
To man denied. The Naiads there retreat,  
And hold, invisible to earth, their seat.  
There, mindful of the port, they boldly drove  
The keel half buried in the sandy cove,  
By their swift oars impell'd—then, forth on land  
Stepp'd from the ship, and rested on the strand ;  
But on his splendid couch, close wrapp'd around,  
They first Ulysses placed in sleep profound,  
With the rich presents the Phæacians gave,  
When Pallas bade them guide him o'er the wave.



These, by the olive roots, without the road  
They safely laid in one collected load,  
Lest ere Ulysses' eye unclosed to day  
Some traveller seize them passing on his way :  
Then sought their home. But still the Sea-God fed  
His vengeance hanging o'er Ulysses' head :  
And thus to Jove complain'd :

‘ Sire ! me no more  
‘ The gods will honour, nor mankind adore,  
‘ Since the Phæacian sons, my native race,  
‘ The God, and author of their blood, disgrace.  
‘ Laertes' son, I deem'd, long labours o'er,  
‘ Would reach at last with life his native shore,  
‘ For such thy promise : but in slumber laid,  
‘ They have that chief to Ithaca convey'd  
‘ With all the gifts Phæacia gave her guest,  
‘ Brass, and bright gold, and many a tissued vest,  
‘ More than from Troy as his allotted spoil  
‘ Had crown'd at Ithaca the conqueror's toil.’

‘ What,’ Jove replied, ‘ has Neptune rashly said ?  
‘ Thee, potent God ! the heavenly powers degrade ?  
‘ Rash were the aim, on thee, the eldest born  
‘ And best of gods to hurl contemptuous scorn.

‘ But if some man in madness of his pride,  
‘ And insolence of power has thee defied,  
‘ Vengeance is thine. Go, execute thy will,  
‘ Whate’er the measure of thy wrath, fulfil.’

‘ Now I had wrought,’ he said, ‘ a god’s desire,  
‘ But that I dread, Omnipotence, thy ire,  
‘ Else I at once would wreck amid the main  
‘ Their beauteous ship, and her returning train ;  
‘ So should they cease their convoys, and around  
‘ Their town a mighty mountain fix its bound.’

‘ Neptune, to me it seems,’ Saturnius said,  
‘ Far better would thy vengeance be allay’d,  
‘ If when Phæacia from her walls survey  
‘ The glorious ship on her returning way,  
‘ Thou turn her into stone : then all would dread,  
‘ While o’er the town the mount its shade outspread.’

He heard, and to Phæacian Scheria pass’d,  
And when the vessel flew before the blast,  
Turn’d it to stone, and striking, downward drove  
Its roots in ocean while it tower’d above,

Then back withdrew : while, awe-struck as they gazed,  
The naval nation thus their voices raised :

‘ Who has that ship, now homeward hastening, staid ?  
‘ E’en now it rose all visibly display’d.’

They spake, but knew not who the wonder wrought :  
When thus the king reveal’d his secret thought :

‘ Ah me ! the ancient prophecies unfold—  
‘ Those that of yore my sire presaging told,  
‘ That Neptune’s wrath should on our race be hurl’d,  
‘ We, guides of all who cross the watery world,  
‘ He said our gallant ship that bravely bore  
‘ The stranger home, returning to her shore,  
‘ Should perish ’mid the main before our sight,  
‘ And o’er our town a mountain stand like night.  
‘ Lo ! ’tis consummated—Thus spake my sire.  
‘ But, ye obedient, act as I require :  
‘ Cease we, henceforth, from convoying o’er the main,  
‘ And lead twelve chosen bulls to Neptune’s fane.  
‘ So may we soothe him, nor afar display’d  
‘ The mountain o’er our town outspread its shade.’

The chiefs the bulls on Neptune’s altar laid,  
And round it to the God devoutly pray’d :

While waking on the land that gave him birth  
Ulysses rose nor knew his native earth,  
So long estranged : for Pallas thickly wound  
The o'ershadowing cloud that fell on all around,  
That none might know him, none his form discern,  
And that himself might first all fully learn :  
None know him, wife, or citizen, or friend,  
Ere on the suitors vengeful death descend.  
Hence all to him a different aspect wore,  
The public ways, the beauteous-haven'd shore,  
High rocks, and fruitful bowers. Erect he stood,  
And all unconscious his loved birth-place view'd :  
Then loudly groan'd, and smote his sounding breast,  
And in deep anguish thus his plaint express'd :

- ‘ Who here inhabit ? men of savage mind,
- ‘ Rude, or religious and to strangers kind ?
- ‘ Where shall I bear these treasures, whither roam ?
- ‘ Would they had lain in their Phæacian home !
- ‘ And that another king of juster sway
- ‘ Had hail'd me guest, and kindly sent away.
- ‘ Where shall I place them ? how abandon here
- ‘ Where all may plunder, nor detection fear ?
- ‘ Ah me ! not all are wise, not all are just :
- ‘ Phæacia's chiefs in whom I placed my trust,



‘ Who vow’d to guide me to my native land,  
‘ Have cast me forth upon a foreign strand.  
‘ Thou, that the impious doom’st who break thy laws,  
‘ Guardian of suppliants, Jove, avenge my cause !  
‘ But let me count these gifts, so clearly learn  
‘ If, plundering me, they quicken’d their return.’

He spake : and counted all his precious store,  
Bright tripods, caldrons, robes, and golden ore :  
Nought fail’d. Yet, mourning for his native land  
He slowly paced along the sea-beat strand,  
When, like a youthful shepherd, Pallas came,  
Like a king’s son, all delicate his frame,  
A cloak twice folded flow’d his shoulders round,  
With spear in hand, his feet with sandals bound.  
Laertes’ son rejoiced, before him press’d,  
And greeting, thus with courteous words address’d :

‘ Hail ! gentle friend ! since thee I foremost find,  
‘ Hail ! nor accost me with averted mind.  
‘ Deign these, my treasures guard, and me defend ;  
‘ To thee, as to a god, I lowly bend :  
‘ And gentle youth ! to me, a stranger, tell  
‘ What region this, and here what natives dwell.  
‘ Is this an island, or some stretch’d out shore  
‘ Of the main land that bends the billows o’er ?’

‘ Senseless in sooth thou art,’ the youth replied,  
‘ Or wander’st from some region far and wide,  
‘ Thus questioning—This land is not unnamed,  
‘ Well known of many, nor obscurely famed  
‘ By those who on the east, and south reside,  
‘ Or where thick clouds the west in darkness hide.  
‘ Rough is the soil, unfit for steeds to race,  
‘ Yet not too sterile, tho’ not wide in space ;  
‘ Here golden harvests wave, there vines extend,  
‘ Fresh falls the dew, and prosperous showers descend,  
‘ Groves of all growth, and goats and herds abound,  
‘ And ceaseless irrigation feeds the ground.  
‘ Hence Ithaca’s proud name, ’tis said, resounds  
‘ Far from Achaia to Troy’s distant bounds.’

The king rejoicing heard the grateful name  
Of his loved country not unknown to fame :  
Then spake, but not the truth : for still his mind  
In every word some latent aim design’d.

‘ E’en in wide Crete, o’er seas remote, my ear  
‘ Has chanced the name of Ithaca to hear :  
‘ Now, on its soil, with half my wealth, I stand,  
‘ Half with my children on their native land.  
‘ Whence, when Orsilochus beneath me bled,  
‘ Son of Idomeneus, afar I fled,

‘ Orsilochus, whose speed, and flying feet  
‘ Outraced the swiftest of the sons of Crete.  
‘ Rash chief, who fain had reft me of my spoil,  
‘ The hard-earn’d harvest of my battle toil,  
‘ Gain’d at life’s risk from Trojan warriors slain,  
‘ And dreadful perils on the storm-toss’d main.  
‘ Rage fired his soul that I at Troy disdain’d  
‘ To serve his father, but my rank maintain’d.  
‘ ’Gainst him, in ambush with one friend, I cast  
‘ My lance, as from the field he homeward pass’d :  
‘ Dark gloom’d the night, no mortal view’d the deed,  
‘ No eye beheld the prone insulter bleed.  
‘ But when he died, I to Phœnicia sail’d,  
‘ Implored its succour, and by gifts prevail’d  
‘ Her sons to bear me safe to Pylos’ sand,  
‘ Or where the Epeans ruled the Elean land.  
‘ But adverse tempests forced them from their way  
‘ Reluctantly, not willing to betray.  
‘ Last night we reach’d at length this distant shore,  
‘ And scarcely gain’d the port with labouring oar.  
‘ There none of food, tho’ hungry, mention made,  
‘ But all rush’d forth, and on the sea-beach staid ;  
‘ There soothing sleep my wearied eyelids closed :  
‘ And while in sweet oblivion I reposed,  
‘ They from the ship brought forth my gather’d store,  
‘ And placed it where I slumber’d on the shore.

‘ All to Sidonia, all are pass’d and gone,  
‘ And here I stand in misery left alone.’

He spake : the Goddess smiled, and clasp’d his hand,  
And, changed in form, before him took her stand,  
Like a majestic female nobly born  
And skill’d in all the arts that birth adorn.

‘ Versute,’ she said, ‘ that god, and skill’d in guiles  
‘ Who circumvents thee with surpassing wiles.  
‘ Keen, versatile, and pregnant with deceit,  
‘ Must thou within thy realm thy frauds repeat ?  
‘ The man as crafty as the youth of yore  
‘ Thou comest revisiting thy native shore.  
‘ Cease we of this. We both, each rightly famed,  
‘ Can hit the mark by wit and wisdom aim’d :  
‘ Thou, first of men, thy speech the council leads,  
‘ First of the gods, my foresight all exceeds.  
‘ Yet knewst thou not Minerva sprung of Jove,  
‘ Who for thy sake descended from above,  
‘ I, at thy side, who, ever prompt to aid,  
‘ Thy friends Phæacia and her monarch made :  
‘ Now come to weave some new design, to save  
‘ The treasures that her generous natives gave  
‘ At thy return. And now I all relate  
‘ That in thy palace waits thee, doom’d by fate,



‘ Severest woes—but thou beneath the yoke  
‘ Of harsh necessity endure the stroke.  
‘ Yet not to man or woman e’er confess  
‘ That here thou comest a wanderer in distress,  
‘ But bear each wrong as one ignobly born,  
‘ And silently submit to taunt and scorn.’

‘ Not easily a man however wise  
‘ Can know thee, Goddess, in each new disguise.  
‘ I knew thee, when at Troy Greece leagued for fight,  
‘ And I in arms found favour in thy sight.  
‘ But when we plunder’d Troy and left her coast,  
‘ And heavenly wrath had scatter’d all our host,  
‘ I ne’er beheld thee, Jove-born Maid! nor view’d  
‘ My toils on ocean at thy sight subdued:  
‘ But wander’d, woe worn, in unsolaced grief,  
‘ Till some kind god in pity brought relief,  
‘ Ere thou thyself, with words of soothing power,  
‘ Vouchsafedst to lead me to Phæacia’s tower.  
‘ Now by thy father, Jove, I thee implore,  
‘ For this I deem not my paternal shore,  
‘ But other far:—methinks thou dost deride,  
‘ And turn’st me, Goddess, from the truth aside.  
‘ O say, if here on Ithaca I stand?  
‘ Is this, O truly say, my native land?’



‘ Thy mind is still the same,’ Minerva said,  
‘ By no event, tho’ unforeseen, betray’d :  
‘ Therefore I will not thee unaided leave  
‘ Thee eloquent, sagacious, thus to grieve.  
‘ What man, returning back, long doom’d to roam,  
‘ But flies to clasp his wife, his child, his home ?  
‘ But thee it suits not, by rash transport sway’d,  
‘ Till cautious trial has thy spouse assay’d,  
‘ Who underneath thy roof, in doubt and fear,  
‘ Waits day and night still adding tear to tear.  
‘ I ne’er had doubt—to me by prescience known—  
‘ That—lost thy friends—thou wouldst return alone :  
‘ But, I was loth, resisting Neptune’s ire,  
‘ To battle with the brother of my sire,—  
‘ Who pours on thee the fury of his might,  
‘ Thee, whose fell guile deprived his son of sight.  
‘ But come, now prove the truth by Pallas told :  
‘ Look on thy realm—thy Ithaca behold.

‘ Here, the hoar sea-god’s, Phorcys’ port extends,  
‘ There, o’er its head, the broad-leaved olive bends,  
‘ Near it behold that lovely shadowy cave,  
‘ The Nymphs’ retreat, the Naiads of the wave :  
‘ The cavern, there, whose spacious roof beneath  
‘ Thy hecatombs oft wound their smoky wreath

‘ In honour of the Nymphs : and, there, o’erspread  
‘ With forests, Neritus uprears his head.’

Then as she clear’d the clouds, and show’d the earth,  
Exultant on the land that gave him birth  
Ulysses knelt, a filial kiss impress’d,  
And with uplifted hands the Nymphs address’d :

‘ Daughters of Jove, ye Nymphs, ye Naiad train,  
‘ I ne’er had hope to look on you again :  
‘ Hail ! now propitious hear my vows once more :  
‘ Hail ! and my gifts shall greet you as of yore,  
‘ If favouring Pallas deign my life defend,  
‘ And unto manhood my son’s day extend.’

‘ Have trust,—not thus be troubled,’ Pallas said,  
‘ Now be thy treasured stores in safety laid  
‘ In the cave’s depth : then, weigh we well the deed,  
‘ And plan how best the future shall succeed.’

She spake, and inly passing search’d the grot  
Where darkness hung on some o’ershadow’d spot :

Then the chief brought the robes within the cave,  
The gold and silver that Phæacia gave,  
And ranged in order : but her arm alone  
On the closed entrance fix'd the guardian stone.

They, where the sacred olive's roots arose  
Sat, and devised how death the suitors guilt should close.

‘ Now, prudent chief,’ she spake, ‘ contrive the way  
‘ How thy just vengeance shall their deeds repay,  
‘ Who o’er thy house, three years, usurping reign,  
‘ Woo thy chaste wife, and strive with gifts to gain,  
‘ Gain her who still for thee perpetual grieves,  
‘ Lures all with hope, but each in turn deceives,  
‘ On flattering messages their soul suspends,  
‘ While other than her word her mind intends.’

‘ I too, beneath my roof,’ the chief replied,  
‘ Had the dire death of Agamemnon died,  
‘ Hadst thou not all disclosed. But now devise  
‘ How best our vengeance shall their guilt chastise :  
‘ And breathe that daring spirit in my breast  
‘ As when we prostrated Troy’s haughty crest :

‘ If thus, once more thou deign thy votary aid  
‘ This arm, thou present, would a host invade.’

‘ I will not fail thee,’ Pallas said, ‘ my power  
‘ Shall o’er thee watch at danger’s trial hour,  
‘ And some, methinks, who waste at will thy store  
‘ Shall with their brains and blood pollute the floor.  
‘ Now I will render thee to all unknown,  
‘ Parch thy smooth skin, and stiffen every bone,  
‘ Pluck from thy graceful head the golden hair,  
‘ And give thee for thy garb vile rags to wear :  
‘ And I will dim those eyes now beaming bright,  
‘ That the proud suitors shall abhor thy sight :  
‘ Thee too, the partner of thy bosom shun,  
‘ And the loved child thou left’st, thine only son.  
‘ Thus changed, to all unknown, thou foremost speed  
‘ Where the lone swineherd tends the entrusted breed,  
‘ Whose heart still cleaves to thee tho’ long unseen,  
‘ And loves thy son, and venerates thy queen.  
‘ He, by the rock of Corax guards thy swine,  
‘ Where Arethusa feeds her fount divine,  
‘ And the herds drink that fatten where they feed  
‘ On acorns gather’d from the umbrageous mead.  
‘ There, all search out, while on fleet wing I soar,  
‘ And Sparta, famed for female charms, explore,

‘ To call thy son, who by thy glory led  
‘ In search of thee, to Menelaus sped.’

‘ Why,’ he replied, ‘ since all to thee reveal’d,  
‘ Why from Telemachus the truth conceal’d ?  
‘ Why must my son, thus grieved, o’er ocean roam,  
‘ While the fell spoilers waste at will his home ?’

‘ Grieve not for him,’ she said, ‘ I, Pallas, sent  
‘ Thy son to gather fame where’er he went—  
‘ No sufferings his.—He, guest in peace resides  
‘ Where Menelaus’ greatness all provides.  
‘ Tho’ in their ship, on his returning way,  
‘ Bribed youths in ambush watch thy son to slay,  
‘ Yet earth’s cold womb shall ere that fatal hour  
‘ Close o’er the wasters that thy wealth devour.’

Then touching with her wand, the Goddess dried  
His skin’s firm smoothness to a rugged hide,  
His golden ringlets bared, and, withering, wound  
The wrinkled flesh of age his limbs around,  
Dimm’d his bright eyes, and o’er him flung a cloke  
And mantle rent to rags, and grimed with smoke :



Round him a large long deer-skin loosely cast,  
Reft of its hairs, and flapping to the blast,  
Gave him a staff, and from his shoulders hung  
A torn patch'd scrip with twisted leather strung.—

Then each diversely went, their council done :  
And Pallas flew to call Ulysses' son.



THE FOURTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses' hospitable reception by Eumæus.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XIV.

As Pallas bade, Ulysses wound his way  
Where the rough road 'mid wood-girt mountains lay,  
And sought Eumæus, by himself preferr'd  
O'er all the menial train to guard his herd.  
Him in his vestibule Ulysses found,  
Where rose his dwelling on conspicuous ground,  
Accessible on all sides, handsome, large,  
Built by himself, and form'd to guard his charge.  
His master gone, he sole that structure made,  
Nor ask'd Laertes, nor the queen to aid.  
'Twas framed of massive stones, and girt around  
With fence of thorns, and with an oaken bound  
Of pales dense fix'd. Within, twelve sties enclosed  
The beds where side by side the swine reposed,



In each, all breeders, fifty females slept ;  
The males, at rest without, their station kept ;  
Less numerous far, for oft the choicest beast  
Forced from the swineherd spread the suitor's feast :  
Yet still that faithful guard the race maintain'd,  
And sixty and three hundred yet remain'd.

Fierce as wild beasts, there by Eumæus fed,  
Near them, four mastives watch'd their guarded bed.  
He, for his feet fresh sandals to provide  
Cut, 'neath his porch a bullock's sable hide :  
While, with three herds, afield, three menials went,  
The fourth, Eumæus to the city sent,  
To drive, by harsh constraint, the fatted boar,  
And swell the festive suitors' daily store.

Soon as the dogs perceived the unknown man  
All, loudly barking, at the stranger ran ;  
But the prompt chief, with keen and crafty mind  
Let loose his staff, and low on earth reclined :  
Yet there the king had nigh his faithful swain  
In his own farm endured severest pain,  
Had not Eumæus, as in haste he threw  
The hide on earth, forth from the portal flew,

With threatening shout, and shower of stones, repress'd  
The mastives' rage, and thus the king address'd.

‘ Old man, on thy torn flesh the dogs had fed,  
‘ And thou hadst doom'd to just reproach my head,  
‘ Me whom harsh gods and unpropitious fate  
‘ Have girt with woes, and bow'd beneath their weight:  
‘ I for my absent lord who here repine,  
‘ And feed, perforce, for alien feasts his swine,  
‘ While he, if yet alive, is doom'd to roam,  
‘ Famish'd, in foreign realms, without a home.  
‘ But, follow me, and in my lodge recline,  
‘ And satiate thy desire with food and wine,  
‘ Then freely, whence thou camest, old man, relate,  
‘ And what the burden of thy bitter fate.’

Then led the way, and inly seating, placed  
Where thick-strown twigs, and rushes interlaced,  
And to repose him, from his wonted bed,  
A large thick goat-skin's shaggy covering spread.  
The kind reception cheer'd Ulysses' breast,  
And thus the grateful king his thanks express'd :

‘ Thee, may the gods, and Jove, kind host ! requite :  
‘ On thee, whate'er thy wish, that gift alight !’

‘ I may not,’ he replied, ‘ with reckless scorn  
‘ Treat one like thee, or one more wretched born.  
‘ Where’er the poor implore, the strangers rove,  
‘ The poor and strangers claim the care of Jove.  
‘ Take what I give ; ’tis sweet, tho’ slight the dole  
‘ When servants dread their youthful lord’s controul.  
‘ The gods my king’s return have long restrain’d,  
‘ Him who still loved me, and my state maintain’d :  
‘ And more had granted, all that gladdens life,  
‘ All that kind lords can give, a home and wife,  
‘ While by their servant’s grateful toil repaid,  
‘ The gods that servant’s prosperous labour aid,  
‘ As heaven has prosper’d mine—O ! had my lord  
‘ Here dwelt in age, how ample my reward.  
‘ He is no more—Would all alike were dead  
‘ Helen’s whole race, for whom the heroes bled.  
‘ He too, with Troy to war, on Phrygia’s strand  
‘ For Agamemnon’s glory left this land.’

Then girt his cloak, and issued where, enclosed  
Within their separate sties the swine reposed,  
And slaughter’d two, and singed, and bit by bit  
Scored them, and fix’d their flesh upon the spit :  
Then, with the fuming spits, fresh sprinkled o’er  
With flour, the banquet to Ulysses bore,

And tempering the wine that crown'd the bowl  
Sat nigh him, face to face, and cheer'd his soul.

‘ Feed on these porkers, our permitted feast,  
‘ While the proud wasters gorge the fatted beast :  
‘ They, who nor reverence feel, nor pity know,  
‘ But shall bow down beneath heaven’s vengeful blow.  
‘ The gods that gift the good, and bless the just,  
‘ Turn from unhallow’d pride and lawless lust.  
‘ E’en fierce invaders who for plunder stray,  
‘ And bear, when Jove permits, their spoil away,  
‘ When fraught with rapine to their home they sail,  
‘ At terroure of impending vengeance quail :  
‘ But these, assured by some celestial word,  
‘ Have of my long-lost lord’s destruction heard,  
‘ Or ne’er their wooing had his wife abused,  
‘ Nor they to seek their realm so long refused,  
‘ But here, without constraint waste all, nor spare,  
‘ Tho’ sated with excess, Ulysses’ heir.  
‘ Long as they here have linger’d, night and day  
‘ They not alone one fatted victim slay ;  
‘ Nor less they swill his wine, profusely drain’d :  
‘ Tho’ like Ulysses none such wealth obtain’d :  
‘ Not mightiest chiefs who on the mainland dwell,  
‘ Or here in Ithaca the rest excel.  
‘ No twenty chiefs such riches can recount :  
‘ List, while I reckon up the vast amount.



‘ Hired serfs, and natives on the mainland, keep  
‘ Watch o’ertwelve herds of beeves, twelve flocks of sheep,  
‘ Twelve droves of swine and goats. And here abound  
‘ Far off where ocean winds our isle around,  
‘ Eleven flocks of goats that browse the plains  
‘ Beneath the tendance of his faithful swains ;  
‘ Of those, each guardian, for the suitors’ food,  
‘ Daily selects his fattest, fairest brood.  
‘ These are my charge : these swine I guard and tend,  
‘ And for their feast, perforce, the choicest send.’

Ulysses drank, and swallowing the food,  
In silence feasted, for his thought was blood.  
But when the banquet had refresh’d his soul  
Eumæus gave him, crown’d with wine, the bowl  
Whence he had drunk. The chief the goblet press’d  
To his glad lip, then thus his host address’d :

‘ Say, who the man, thus rich, thus widely known,  
‘ This potent man who bought thee for his own.  
‘ Thou saidst he died for Agamemnon’s fame :  
‘ I too perchance have known him : tell his name.  
‘ Jove and the gods best know, if ere descried  
‘ I met him in my wanderings far and wide.’



‘ None,’ he replied, where’er the stranger stray’d  
‘ Could, mentioning him, his wife and son persuade.  
‘ How oft a ready welcome to obtain,  
‘ The wanderers here a flattering rumour feign.  
‘ Whoe’er accosts the Ithacensian isle  
‘ Seeks with smooth tale my mistress to beguile :  
‘ She kindly greets him, and the past recalls,  
‘ And while minutely probed, her tear-drop falls,  
‘ Tears such as wives in depth of misery shed  
‘ Who mourn their lords in distant regions dead.  
‘ Thou too, my friend, a cloak and vest to gain,  
‘ Wouldst file thy tongue to some fallacious strain.  
‘ But now on him fierce dogs and birds have fed,  
‘ And from his fleshless bones the spirit fled,  
‘ Or the sea-fish has prey’d, ere cast on land  
‘ His corse lay mouldering ’neath a shroud of sand.  
‘ So he has died, and left his friends to groan ;  
‘ Deep grief to all, most deep to me alone.  
‘ Where’er I go I never more shall find  
‘ One like that lord, beneficent and kind :  
‘ No, not revisiting the ancestral dome,  
‘ The hearth that rear’d me, and my natal home.  
‘ Not thus I long, tho’ longing much, once more  
‘ To view my parents on my native shore,  
‘ As to behold Ulysses, whom I fear  
‘ Almost to name, I so that name revere,

‘ For much he loved me : and, tho’ far apart,  
‘ Him will I call, deep-rooted in my heart,  
‘ My elder brother.’

Then the chief replied,  
‘ Since thus by thee incredulous denied  
‘ Thy lord’s return, not by a word alone  
‘ But by a solemn oath the truth be known :  
‘ He shall return : and, when return’d, once more  
‘ Ulysses hails his hearth and native shore,  
‘ For my reward a robe and mantle give,  
‘ Which, now, tho’ wanted, I will ne’er receive :  
‘ For like the gate of hell that man I hate  
‘ Who dares, by want seduced, a lie relate.  
‘ First of the gods, on highest Jove I call :  
‘ And witness thou, thy hospitable hall !  
‘ And great Ulysses’ hearth I soon shall hail,  
‘ Of all, by me now utter’d, nought shall fail.  
‘ This year thy lord returns, so heaven ordains,  
‘ Ere this month closes, and another reigns :  
‘ This year shall view the work of vengeance done  
‘ On those who wrong’d his wife and glorious son.’

‘ Hope not for this,’ Eumæus said, ‘ reward :  
‘ Ne’er shall his palace hail again its lord.

‘ Drink thou in peace, that troublous theme restrain,  
‘ Force me no more to dwell on it again :  
‘ It wounds my inmost soul, it racks my ear,  
‘ Whene’er my master’s much-loved name I hear.  
‘ Leave we the oath unsworn—Come, hero ! come  
‘ Such as thy wife and I recall thee home,  
‘ And aged Laertes, and thy son divine,  
‘ The glorious heir of thy illustrious line,  
‘ For whom I grieve—He, who before my view  
‘ Like a fair plant ’neath heaven’s kind tendance grew :  
‘ He, whom I deem’d would match his far-famed sire  
‘ In beauteous person, and heroic fire :  
‘ But now some mortal or immortal power  
‘ Mars the fair promise of his youthful hour.  
‘ He Pylos sought, of his lost sire to learn,  
‘ While in close ambush, watching his return,  
‘ The impious wooers wait to root from earth,  
‘ And nameless leave Arcesias’ heavenly birth.  
‘ Cease we of him, if doom’d to ’scape or die  
‘ Jove, o’er him stretch thy guardian arm from high !  
‘ But, ancient man, unerringly disclose  
‘ What thou hast borne, thy individual woes :  
‘ Who art thou ? whence, thy realm, thy parents ? say :  
‘ What vessel bore thee o’er the billowy way ?  
‘ How, and what seamen steer’d thee to our strand :  
‘ For thou on foot, I deem, ne’er gain’dst our land.’

‘ All shall be truly told,’ the chief replied,  
‘ Yet could thy ample stores for us provide  
‘ Food and sweet wine, that we might feast in peace,  
‘ While others toil, nor e’er from labour cease,  
‘ I could not then thro’ twelve long moons relate  
‘ All I have suffer’d from remorseless fate.

‘ From far-famed Crete’s extensive isle I trace,  
‘ Son of a wealthy sire, my boasted race :  
‘ And many a son to him was born and bred,  
‘ All, lawful produce of the marriage bed,  
‘ But, purchased by his wealth, a harlot slave,  
‘ The mother, who to me existence gave.  
‘ Yet with his lawful sons alike endear’d  
‘ With all a father’s love me Castor rear’d.  
‘ They, when in course of time their father died,  
‘ Decreed by lot his riches to divide,  
‘ But unto me the offspring of a slave  
‘ Alone a scanty dole and dwelling gave.  
‘ Yet, for my worth, Crete’s ancient race among  
‘ A wife I chose from wealthy parents sprung.  
‘ Not weak in war my youth—’tis pass’d—’tis o’er—  
‘ Guess from the straw what glorious grain it bore.  
‘ Now bow’d by woe, but then in arms array’d,  
‘ I broke the battle by Minerva’s aid :



‘ And oft the God of war led on my way  
‘ When I in ambush with my chosen lay,  
‘ Brooding on blood: nor then in shadowy fear,  
‘ E’er to my thought did death’s pale form appear,  
‘ But foremost springing forth, the foe I slew  
‘ When gaining on his flight my javelin flew.  
‘ Such my war course—But ne’er the cultured field,  
‘ Household, or child, to me could pleasure yield,  
‘ But the oar’d bark still swam before my sight,  
‘ Bright spears and arrows, and each form of fight:  
‘ All that to others formidable seem’d,  
‘ By me alone were cherish’d and esteem’d.  
‘ Such was my nature by the gods inclined,  
‘ Who guide to diverse ends each different mind:  
‘ For ere Greece sail’d to Troy, nine times I led  
‘ To foreign realms o’er ocean’s distant bed  
‘ My well-arm’d bands. Success still crown’d my toil,  
‘ The while at will I cull’d the chosen spoil,  
‘ And more by lot obtain’d. Wide spread my fame,  
‘ Wealth fill’d my house, and great in Crete my name.  
‘ But when stern Jove that direful course decreed,  
‘ Where Grecia’s bravest sons were doom’d to bleed,  
‘ I and Idomeneus, our nation’s choice,  
‘ There sail’d obedient to the public voice.  
‘ When Greece was leagued, we dared not stand aloof,  
‘ So dire the dread of national reproof.



‘ Nine years we warr’d, the tenth, when earthward cast  
‘ From plunder’d Ilion, home the conquerors pass’d,  
‘ The God dispersed them ; and with hostile mind  
‘ ’Gainst me relentless Jove dire ills design’d.  
‘ One month alone by household bliss detain’d,  
‘ I with my sons and much-loved wife remain’d.  
‘ Then on I gladly steer’d for Ægypt’s coast,  
‘ With a fair navy and illustrious host.  
‘ The crew was swiftly raised, nine ships prepared,  
‘ Six days my joyful friends the banquet shared :  
‘ The while I offer’d many a chosen beast  
‘ To greet the gods, and spread the abundant feast.  
‘ On the seventh day from spacious Crete we sail’d,  
‘ And smooth our voyage while the north prevail’d.  
‘ Each ship, each seaman safe, we sat reclined,  
‘ By the skill’d steersman borne before the wind.  
‘ On the fifth day, where Ægypt’s river flow’d  
‘ We came, and in the stream at anchor rode :  
‘ Then, by my strict command, I charged my train  
‘ To guard the fleet, and there at peace remain :  
‘ And forth I sent my spies to search around,  
‘ And from each vantage height explore the ground :  
‘ But they in insolence of pride and power,  
‘ Wasted the Ægyptian fields and fruitful bower,  
‘ Their wives and children seized, the natives slew,  
‘ Till the dire clamour thro’ the city flew,

‘ And all, both horse and foot, at dawn of day,  
‘ Fill’d the whole plain with battle’s brazen bray.  
‘ Then thunder-joying Jove spread fear and flight  
‘ Through all our host—none dared withstand the fight.  
‘ There many a Cretan warrior breathless bled,  
‘ And those who lived to servitude were led.  
‘ But Jove thus moved my mind—O would that death  
‘ Ere worse befel, had there first closed my breath—  
‘ Strait from my brow my helmet I unbound,  
‘ And cast my shield and war-lance on the ground,  
‘ Before the courser of the king I knelt,  
‘ And kiss’d his knee, and strove his heart to melt:  
‘ He pitied, saved, and seating in his car,  
‘ Home drove me weeping from the field of war.  
‘ ’Gainst me their ashen spears the avengers shower’d,  
‘ Intent to slay, so rage their souls o’erpower’d.  
‘ But the king saved, who fear’d the wrath to move  
‘ The guilt-avenger’s, hospitable Jove.  
‘ Seven years in Ægypt peaceful I remain’d,  
‘ And from their gifts—all gave—large treasures gain’d.  
‘ There, the eighth year, a sly Phœnician came,  
‘ Bane of mankind, well-skill’d strange guiles to frame.  
‘ Lured by his tempting words I join’d his way,  
‘ Where in that realm his home and treasures lay:  
‘ A year there dwelt, but when another year  
‘ Revolving recommenced its due career,

‘ He, meditating fraud ’gainst me, prevail’d,  
‘ And I to Lybia as his partner sail’d,  
‘ His aim to sell me on his bartering course,  
‘ Where I, tho’ not suspectless, went perforce.  
‘ Mid-way, off Crete, before the northern wind  
‘ Flew the swift ship when Jove dire woe design’d.  
‘ For as our bark from less’ning Crete withdrew,  
‘ And heaven and ocean met alone our view,  
‘ Above the ship Jove hung a sable cloud,  
‘ And hid the deep beneath the o’ershadowing shroud,  
‘ And fiercely thundering, through the whirlwind blast  
‘ On the rent ship the flame-wing’d lightning cast,  
‘ And fill’d the wreck with sulphur—’mid the deep  
‘ Hurl’d from the deck by the tempestuous sweep  
‘ The crew, like gulls, their shatter’d ship around  
‘ Rode on the billows but no refuge found.  
‘ But Jove, to me tho’ rack’d with misery, gave  
‘ A mast of power to combat with the wave,  
‘ And ’scape destruction—on that float I clung,  
‘ And work’d my way the wind and waves among.  
‘ Nine days I toss’d: but to Thesprotia’s shore  
‘ Me, the tenth night, a rolling billow bore.  
‘ There, Phidon, o’er that realm who justly reign’d,  
‘ Me, with unbribed benevolence detain’d:  
‘ For when I sunk, with cold and toil o’erwrought,  
‘ His son upheld me, to his father brought,

‘ And graced with robe and radiant tunic—There  
‘ I heard glad tidings of Laertes’ heir.  
‘ ’Twas the king told me that his royal dome  
‘ Had entertain’d the chief returning home :  
‘ And show’d me all his wealth and gather’d store,  
‘ His brass, his gold, and iron’s well-wrought ore,  
‘ Enough for ten descents to serve his race :  
‘ Such his vast wealth that stored that guarded place.  
‘ Himself, he said, sought counsel of the oak  
‘ That in Dodona’s grove Jove’s answer spoke,  
‘ Sought, how, long absent, best to reach again  
‘ Disguised, or openly his native plain :  
‘ And libating the gods the monarch swore  
‘ All was prepared to land him on his shore  
‘ Seamen and ship. That time, for voyage fraught,  
‘ As a Thesprotian ship Dulichium sought,  
‘ The king there bade me sail, and charged the band  
‘ To guard me to the lord who ruled that land.  
‘ But, in mid ocean, their flagitious mind  
‘ To sell me for a base born slave design’d,  
‘ They stripp’d my mantle and rich robe, and wound  
‘ These rags you now behold my limbs around.  
‘ Last eve to Ithaca’s fair fields they pass’d,  
‘ And in the ship with cordage bound me fast.  
‘ But on the sea-beach as they shared the feast,  
‘ Me from their bonds the gods with ease released.



‘ I wrapp’d my brow in rags, and rashly brave,  
‘ Slid down the helm, and lay upon the wave,  
‘ Oar’d with both arms, and from their ship disjoin’d,  
‘ Soon left, as on I swam, the crew behind :  
‘ Then where a thicket its close branches spread,  
‘ I pass’d, and hid me in its leafy bed.  
‘ They grieving roam’d around, but dared no more  
‘ On further search the unknown land explore,  
‘ But gain’d their ship, while me heaven’s guardian power  
‘ Conceal’d at will within that leafy bower,  
‘ Then led me to this lodge where wisdom reigns ;  
‘ For fate to me yet length of life ordains.’

‘ Ah wretch ! thou mov’st me much,’ Eumæus said,  
‘ For thou hast much endured, and widely stray’d.  
‘ Yet all in vain, thus fabling of my lord,  
‘ Thou wouldst persuade me with delusive word.  
‘ Such as thou art, why labour to deceive ?  
‘ Of him I know what rightly to believe.  
‘ Him the gods hate ; for not the host of Troy  
‘ Nor treacherous friends at home could him destroy,  
‘ Else all the Greeks had tomb’d him, and his name  
‘ Had left his son the heritage of fame.  
‘ Him have the harpies vilely snatch’d away,  
‘ While, with my charge, I here at distance stay,



‘ Nor seek the town unless the queen requires,  
‘ Or some new stranger’s tale new hope inspires.  
‘ Let them attend who waste unshamed his board,  
‘ Or those who sorrow for their long-lost lord :  
‘ I will no more enquire : I dread deceit,  
‘ Since I was wrong’d by that Ætolian cheat,  
‘ That murderous wretch who far and widely stray’d,  
‘ Begg’d at my lodge, and his kind host betray’d.  
‘ He said, that with Idomeneus at Crete  
‘ He saw the chief refit his storm-toss’d fleet :  
‘ And that in summer, or the autumnal hour  
‘ He with encrease of wealth, in height of power,  
‘ Would with his friends return—but, thou abstain,  
‘ Nor, sufferer ! strive my will by guile to gain :  
‘ No flattering fictions can my favour move :  
‘ But pity, and just dread of hospitable Jove.’

Him answering, thus the much-endurer said,  
‘ Hard of belief, not oaths can thee persuade.  
‘ But—be our compact tested by each god,  
‘ Who in Olympus holds his high abode,  
‘ If to this roof once more return thy king  
‘ That thou to me a vest and tunic bring,  
‘ And send me to Dulichium : if he fail,  
‘ Gather thy hinds, and bid them me assail,  
‘ And hurl me from the rock, and breathless leave,  
‘ So that henceforth no stranger dare deceive.’

‘ Guest,’ thus Eumæus answer’d, ‘ great my praise  
‘ For virtue, now, and in all future days,  
‘ If I, who here my guest invited led  
‘ Should slay thee at the very hearth that fed,  
‘ How should I then to Jove address my prayer ?  
‘ But now the evening meal demands my care.  
‘ Here will my comrades soon return, and spread  
‘ The grateful feast beneath my peaceful shed.’

While thus they commune held, at day’s decline  
Came from their range the swineherds with the swine :  
They in their sties to rest the droves recall,  
And wide their clangour as they throng’d the stall.

‘ Select,’ Eumæus cried, ‘ the fattest boar  
‘ My guest to gladden, and our strength restore ;  
‘ We who have watch’d our charge, hour after hour,  
‘ While some, unpunish’d, all our toil devour.’

He spake, and split the wood, while in they led  
A five-year’d boar that fattened as he fed,  
And held him at the hearth : with pious mind  
Eumæus, ever to the gods resign’d,  
Pluck’d from the victim’s front the hallow’d hair,  
And cast it in the flame, and pour’d his prayer  
For his loved lord’s return : then, smiting, broke  
With the hard fragment of the splitted oak

The boar's bold front : life left him where he lay :  
His throat they cut, and singed his hair away,  
And piece-meal sever'd : then Eumæus' art  
Close wrapp'd in fat each raw and bleeding part :  
Some on the fire he laid with flour immix'd,  
And scored and sliced the rest, and firmly fix'd  
All on the spits ; then, nicely dress'd, withdrew,  
And on the table spread before their view.  
Then, skill'd to carve, and justly dole the meat,  
Uprose the good Eumæus from his seat,  
And portioning the whole in sevenfold shares,  
At once the offering and the feast prepares :  
One to the nymphs, and Hermes, Maia's son,  
He, praying, gave, and to each feaster one,  
But graced with the perpetual chine his guest,  
Who thus the gladness of his heart express'd :

‘ May Jove watch o’er thee, thee whom I revere,  
‘ Thou who hast deign’d this wretched stranger cheer.’

Ulysses spake : Eumæus thus replied,  
‘ Feast, and enjoy the banquet I provide.  
‘ The God at will this grants and that denies,  
‘ Resistless is his might who rules the skies.’

Then gave the firstlings to the powers divine,  
And duly libated with purple wine,

And gave the goblet to Ulysses' hand,  
Who by his portion sat amid the band.  
To each his dole of bread Mesaulius brought,  
Whom from the Taphians erst Eumæus bought  
With his own wealth, nor sought Laertes' aid,  
Nor yet the queen's, when far Ulysses stray'd.  
They feasted, and, when, hunger now suppress'd,  
Mesaulius clear'd the board, they sought their rest.  
Darkness ensued, and Jove throughout the night  
Shower'd, and fierce blew the west wind's watery might.  
Ulysses then Eumæus' heart to prove,  
If his free bounty match'd his word of love,  
And would to him a mantle kindly spare,  
Or urge his hinds to listen to that prayer,  
Thus spake :

‘ Eumæus ! and ye labourers ! hear :  
‘ If ought I boast, wine pours it on your ear :  
‘ Wine that compels the wise like fools to sing,  
‘ To smirk and smile and foot it in the ring,  
‘ And oft to utter an unseemly word,  
‘ Such as had better been by all unheard.  
‘ But since I thus have brawl'd, ye all must hear.  
‘ O that were mine my strength in youthful year,  
‘ When we at Troy in ambush lay, led on  
‘ By Menelaus and Laertes' son,



‘ And I the third : so will’d they : at the hour  
‘ When first we reach’d the walls, and lofty tower,  
‘ Then, arm’d, where many a thicket girt the town,  
‘ We, in the marsh, ’mid reeds lay couchant down.  
‘ Chill came the night, and bleak the north wind blew  
‘ Like hoar rime o’er us, dense the snow storm flew,  
‘ Glazing our shields : beneath them, wrapp’d around  
‘ In cloaks and vests all slept in peace profound,  
‘ All but myself, who left my cloak behind,  
‘ And went unmindful of the wintry wind  
‘ With my bright belt and buckler fenced alone :  
‘ And when the third part of the night was flown,  
‘ And dim the stars, I, at Ulysses’ side  
‘ Him with my elbow touch’d, and waking, cried  
‘ Soon shall I cease to breathe, the northern gale  
‘ And the keen frost my rigid limbs assail :  
‘ Fool’d by some god, without my cloak I came :  
‘ Alone this tunic guards my freezing frame.  
‘ At once a project cross’d that hero’s mind,  
‘ Famed both for war and wisdom ’mid mankind.  
‘ Hush !—with low voice—lest others hear—he said :  
‘ Then on his elbow as he propp’d his head,  
‘ Spake : Hear, my friends ! a night-dream I repeat :  
‘ Hear !—we are couch’d far distant from our fleet.  
‘ Go one, and urge Atrides’ son to send  
‘ Fresh combatants our ambush to defend.



‘ Thoas, Andræmon’s heir, at once upsprung,  
‘ And off in haste his purple mantle flung,  
‘ And to the navy flew, the while I lay  
‘ Warm in his vesture till the dawn of day.  
‘ If now such strength, such youthful vigour mine,  
‘ Soon would some hind a cloak to me resign,  
‘ A twofold gift, for reverence and for love :  
‘ But now these rags contempt and hatred move.’

‘ Thy narrative, old man,’ Eumæus said,  
‘ Thou well in graceful diction hast array’d,  
‘ All rightly told : therefore, my welcome guest,  
‘ Thou shalt not long in vain desire a vest,  
‘ Nor ought that suits a hapless suppliant’s prayer :  
‘ But thou at morn again thy tatters wear ;  
‘ Not many cloaks or tunics here abound :  
‘ One for each man for us sufficient found.  
‘ But when Ulysses’ son returns again,  
‘ Thou shalt from him a cloak and tunic gain :  
‘ He too, whate’er thy wish, where’er thy home,  
‘ Will send thee safe to thy paternal dome.’

Then near the fire prepared Ulysses’ bed  
With fleeces of fair sheep and goats o’erspread.  
Thus couch’d, Laertes’ son his eyelids closed,  
And there Eumæus, as his lord reposed

O'er him, his large and dense wove mantle cast,  
Sole change when drench'd by winter's stormy blast.  
The king and hinds there slept. Yet ne'er thy mind  
Eumæus from thy herd to rest, inclined.  
He arm'd himself, and went—Ulysses joy'd  
That thus that faithful friend his days employ'd,  
And, in his absence, watch'd the entrusted store.  
Foremost, Eumæus slung his shoulders o'er  
A sharp-edged sword : then, doubling round him, roll'd,  
Fence of keen winds, the mantle's ample fold,  
And a huge shagg'd goat's skin—Then grasp'd the spear  
To guard him issuing on his night-career,  
From dogs and men—So took his wonted way  
Where 'neath the rock his charge fenced from the north  
wind lay.



THE FIFTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Telemachus by the advice of Pallas returns to Ithaca. Eumæus relates his adventures to Ulysses. The interview of Telemachus and Eumæus.



# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XV.

PALLAS, to warn the wanderer home again  
Pass'd forth to Lacedæmon's spacious plain :  
Couch'd in the vestibule, the Goddess found  
Telemachus and Nestor's son renown'd.  
Sleep lay on Nestor's son, but no repose  
Could his companion's wearied eyelid close :  
Deep thoughts that mourn'd his father, bade him wake,  
When hanging o'er him thus Minerva spake :

‘ Not rightly thus thou linger'st far from home,  
‘ While the proud wasters in thy royal dome  
‘ Divide thy wealth. Beware, lest all destroy'd  
‘ Thou roam in fruitless wanderings misemploy'd.  
‘ But—Menelaus urge to speed thy way,  
‘ That thou mayst yet Penelope delay,  
‘ Whom now her brethren, and her sire command  
‘ To meet Eurymachus in wedlock band ;

‘ He whose rich gifts his rivals far excel,  
‘ And more and more the nuptial portion swell.  
‘ Haste, lest thy wealth from thee thy mother bear,  
‘ Haste, for thou know’st the woman’s wonted care,  
‘ Prone to augment her present husband’s store,  
‘ Alike forgetful of the babes she bore,  
‘ As of the man now number’d with the dead,  
‘ Who first in youth enjoy’d her virgin bed.  
‘ Go, and to one deserving of regard,  
‘ To some fit matron give thy stores to guard,  
‘ Till heaven thy wife select.—Now, mark my word,  
‘ And in thy mind indelibly record.  
‘ For thee, in Ithaca’s and Samos’ strait  
‘ An ambush’d band of bravest wooers wait,  
‘ To slay thee ere thou gain thy native shore:  
‘ But first dark earth shall close the suitors o’er,  
‘ Those who thy substance waste : thus warn’d of guile,  
‘ Steer thy brave vessel far from either isle.  
‘ And as you loosen to the night your sail  
‘ A guardian god will send the favouring gale.  
‘ Soon as thou gain’st thy island’s nearest strand  
‘ Back to the town thy friends and bark command,  
‘ But seek thou first the guardian of thy swine,  
‘ That friend whose heart still hangs on thee and thine :  
‘ There sleep : but bid him to the queen repair,  
‘ And safe from Pylos thy return declare.’

Thus Pallas spake, and vanishing from sight,  
Staid on the Olympian eminence her flight.  
The prince the slumber of his comrade broke,  
Touch'd with his heel his foot, and, swiftly spoke :

‘ Rise, rise Pisistratus ! no more delay,  
‘ Yoke to the car thy steeds, and speed our way.’

‘ Not—tho’ desirous,’ thus the youth replied,  
‘ Attempt not ’mid dark night the steeds to guide.  
‘ Soon dawns the day—wait, till the king at morn  
‘ Shall with rare gifts thy parting car adorn,  
‘ And send thee forth, and with kind farewell greet :  
‘ So shall remembrance long as life repeat  
‘ How the kind host received his grateful guest,  
‘ And hospitality link’d breast to breast.’

Bright beam’d the dawn, when from fair Helen’s bed,  
Where the youths communed, Menelaus sped.  
Ulysses’ son perceived him, and in haste  
Girt his bright tunic round his graceful waist,  
Cast his large mantle o’er his breadth of breast,  
Sped forth, and near him drew, and thus address’d :

‘ Jove-nurtured Menelaus ! Atreus’ heir,  
‘ Guide of the nation, grant my earnest prayer,

‘ Now send me home, and, by thy aid once more  
‘ Give to these longing eyes my native shore.’

‘ Not long, Telemachus,’ the king replied,  
‘ Thy ardent wish shall be ungratified.  
‘ The host I blame, whom boundless love or hate  
‘ Drives to extremes : far best, man’s equal state.  
‘ Alike the ill the unwilling to detain  
‘ Or force those forth desirous to remain.  
‘ With open arms the present guest receive,  
‘ But aid his wishes, if his wish to leave.  
‘ Wait, till my presents on thy car I lay,  
‘ And thou the treasures joyfully survey.  
‘ Wait, till the menials shall the feast prepare,  
‘ And thou, ere left my roof, the banquet share.  
‘ Glory and grace and profit wait his course,  
‘ Who, wandering far, feasts his recruited force.  
‘ But if thou will all Argos traverse o’er,  
‘ I will myself attend, the way explore,  
‘ For thee my coursers yoke, and at thy side  
‘ From realm to realm ’mid peopled cities guide :  
‘ And ne’er from these shalt thou ungifted pass :  
‘ Here a rich tripod wrought of burnish’d brass,  
‘ Here a bright caldron, or two mules be thine,  
‘ Or a large goblet from the golden mine.’

‘ Great king !’ the youth replied, ‘ I fully fain  
‘ Would to my palace now return again.  
‘ None, when I went, no guardian there I left ;  
‘ And much I dread, lest I, of all bereft,  
‘ Seeking my sire, should perish, or deplore  
‘ The brightest treasure of my plunder’d store.’

The monarch bade his wife, and maids prepare  
The royal banquet from his plenteous fare.  
Then Eteoneus, rising from his bed,  
Who near Atrides dwelt, before him sped,  
And at the royal mandate heap’d the wood,  
And lit the fire to roast the fleshy food.  
Meanwhile the generous son of Atreus went  
Where his rich chamber forth its fragrance sent ;  
And beauteous Helen, where her treasures lay,  
And Megapenthes join’d the monarch’s way.  
Atrides from his stores a goblet brought,  
And gave his son a cup with silver wrought.  
Fair Helen drew from the surrounding chests  
Wove by her hand where slept the embroider’d vests,  
One, ’neath the rest, the fullest, fairest far,  
That beam’d in brightness like eve’s lonely star.  
Then back they went, and sought their royal guest,  
Whom thus great Atreus’ gold-hair’d son address’d :



‘ Prince! at thy wish may Juno’s thundering lord,  
‘ Jove, guard and guide thee, to thy realm restored!  
‘ Whate’er my treasury boasts, the choice receive,  
‘ To thee the rarest, richest gift I give,  
‘ The elaborated bowl which here I hold,  
‘ All silver, save its margin charged with gold;  
‘ Vulcanian work, the gift of him whose sway  
‘ Ruled, when from Sidon pass’d my homeward way,  
‘ King Phædimus, beneath whose roof I slept—  
‘ Son! be it thine, in proof of friendship kept.’

Then gave the bowl. Next Megapenthes bore  
His proffer’d goblet wrought of silver ore.

Next, Helen, roseate-cheek’d, the robe display’d,  
Drew nigh, and thus accosting, kindly said :

‘ I too, to thee, loved youth, a gift impart,  
‘ Token of Helen’s hand, and Helen’s heart,  
‘ To grace thy bride at Hymen’s blissful hour;  
‘ Till then thy mother shall preserve this dower  
‘ In her own home. And now farewell—once more  
‘ Heaven guide thee to regain thy native shore!’

She spake, and in his hand the treasure placed,  
And the prince gladden’d by fair Helen graced :

There all, within the chariot's coffer laid,  
With wondering gaze Pisistratus survey'd.

Then to his court Atrides led them on,  
And seated each on his convivial throne.  
In a bright silver bowl their hands to lave  
From a gold vase a female pour'd the wave,  
And nigh each guest a polish'd table spread,  
Where the house guardian heap'd the food and bread:  
Boëtheus' son then carved the abundant fare  
And gave to every guest an equal share.  
The king himself the goblet largely fill'd,  
And the guests feasted as their fancy will'd.  
Now satiate, all, the prince with urgent speed,  
And Nestor's son swift yoked each ready steed:  
And seated in their cars the coursers drove  
Thro' the resounding porch, and long alcove:  
Atrides following, in his right hand bore  
A goblet charged with nectar, to adore  
The gods at parting, then, before the yoke  
Pledged where he stood the wine, and swiftly spoke:

‘ Farewell, my sons: with salutation due  
‘ To Pylos' king my gratitude renew:  
‘ Greet him who, while the Achæans warr'd at Troy,  
‘ Watch'd o'er me as a father guards his boy.’

‘ Yes,’ the prince answer’d, ‘ we with willing mind  
‘ Will all relate whate’er by thee enjoin’d.  
‘ Would that return’d to my paternal seat  
‘ I to Ulysses might thy speech repeat,  
‘ As home I go with kindest deeds o’erdone,  
‘ And treasures lavish’d on Ulysses’ son.’

While thus he spake, stretch’d o’er him, in his view,  
A mountain eagle at his right hand flew,  
Which in his talons bore the pamper’d prey,  
A goose from forth the court-yard snatch’d away :  
A shouting throng pursued : but on the right  
Before the steeds the eagle wing’d his flight.  
In all who view’d, that omen joy awoke,  
When young Pisistratus thus, foremost spoke :

‘ Say, Menelaus ! king, beloved of heaven,  
‘ Whether to us, or thee, that portent given ?’

While Menelaus, meditating, thought  
How best to frame his speech with wisdom fraught,

‘ Hear me,’ the long-robed Helen quick replied,  
‘ ’Tis the Gods prompt, in what I say, confide.  
‘ As yon fierce eagle from the mountain’s crest,  
‘ His cloud-girt birth place, and aerial nest,

‘ Has in his claws the goose domestic borne,  
‘ Nursed by our care, and from our court-yard torn,  
‘ Thus shall return, much suffering, wandering long,  
‘ Ulysses, and avenge each household wrong :  
‘ E’en haply now at home, e’en haply now  
‘ Death to the wooers swells his thoughtful brow.’

‘ So,’ the prince said, ‘ so perfect, Jove ! my prayer :  
‘ And as a goddess I will hail thee there.’

Then lash’d the steeds that thro’ the city flew,  
And swiftly o’er the plain the chariot drew,  
Throughout the day urged their unceasing flight  
Till the path darken’d in the shade of night :  
Then to Diocleus’ dome the travellers sped,  
Son of Orsilochus, of Alpheüs bred :  
Slept ’neath his welcome roof in still repose,  
And yoked their chariot as the dawn uprose,  
Drove thro’ the echoing porch each vigorous steed,  
And briskly lash’d their not unwilling speed :  
Then on to Pylos’ lofty city press’d,  
When thus Ulysses’ son his friend address’d :

‘ How wilt thou, friend ! thy promise now redeem ?  
‘ We, who each other hold in high esteem,



‘ Pledged by our fathers, and whose equal year,  
‘ And perils of this journey more endear.  
‘ Urge not, I pray, my course beyond the fleet,  
‘ But let me there my faithful comrades greet,  
‘ Lest Nestor’s kindness me tho’ loth detain,  
‘ While my heart yearns to reach my realm again.’

He spake : and Nestor’s son, revolving, thought  
How his pledged promise might be fully wrought.  
This best beseem’d.—With unabated speed  
Down to the ship he lash’d each willing steed :  
There in the stern the gold and garments stored,  
The splendid gifts of Sparta’s generous lord :  
Then thus advised him :

‘ Swift the deck ascend,  
‘ And timely urge on board each faithful friend,  
‘ Ere to the palace of the king I go,  
‘ And Nestor from my word the secret know.  
‘ For known to me the nature of his mind,  
‘ His generous soul how ardently inclined :  
‘ Here will he haste, and clasp thee to his heart,  
‘ Nor suffer thee ungifted to depart.’

Then turn’d his steeds, and back to Pylos scourged :  
While thus the prince his faithful followers urged :



‘ Haste !—for our quick departure all provide,  
‘ And quickly to its port the vessel guide.’

They heard, and all obey’d, and rank by rank  
Sat with uplifted oars bow’d o’er the bank.  
Thus the prince hasten’d all, and lonely pray’d,  
And nigh the stern due rites to Pallas paid.  
That time a homicide, far born, drew near,  
One who from Argos fled, a noted seer,  
Sprung from Melampus, who, in happier hour  
Amid the Pylians, bless’d with wealth and power,  
Dwelt, highly honour’d in his stately dome,  
Then left his country, and his native home,  
Fled from the realm where powerful Neleus reign’d,  
Who thro’ the year his wealth by force detain’d,  
While bow’d by woe, in bitter bondage kept  
In Phylacus’s house the prophet wept,  
When by Erinnyes’ maddening sting possess’d,  
Fell wrath for Neleus’ daughter fired his breast :  
But he escaping death, to Pylos drove  
The herds from Phylace’s luxuriant grove.  
On haughty Neleus vengeance took, and led  
His beauteous daughter to a brother’s bed :  
Then came to Argos where his fated hand  
Stretch’d its just sceptre o’er the peopled land ;  
There raised his dome, and from the chaste embrace  
Of his loved consort, rear’d a valiant race,

Antiphates and Mantius, chiefs far famed :  
Antiphates his son Oicleus named,  
Oicleus gave Amphiaräus birth,  
By Jove and Phœbus loved o'er all on earth,  
Yet, ere old age, in Thebes the prophet died  
Thro' a bribed woman's guilt, and tempted pride :  
From him Amphilocus was foremost bred,  
And brave Alcmaëon bless'd his nuptial bed.  
From Mantius' loins, two sons of equal might,  
Clytus and Polyphides sprung to light.  
Morn, golden-throned, enamour'd of his charms,  
To heaven young Clytus bore to bless her arms :  
But Polyphides, by Apollo's aid,  
When death o'er Amphiaräus cast his shade,  
All seers surpassing, deeds to come presaged,  
But with his father bitterly enraged  
Forsook the shelter of his native home,  
And dwelt far-famed in Hyperesia's dome.  
His offspring, Theoclymenus by name,  
There, to Ulysses' son, a suppliant came,  
And while the prince to heaven devoutly pray'd,  
And libated the gods, thus swiftly said :

‘ Now, since I find thee sacrificing here,  
‘ By those dread rites, and him whom all revere,  
‘ By thy own safety, and each trusty friend  
‘ Who on thy various fortune dared attend,

‘ The truth to me disclose, nor aught conceal,  
‘ Who art thou ? whence ? thy parents ? realm ? reveal.

‘ Hear,’ he replied, ‘ so satiate thy desire :  
‘ From Ithaca my origin. My sire—  
‘ When once he was—Ulysses—now no more ;  
‘ By ruthless fate slain on some foreign shore :  
‘ Hence with my friends o’er land and sea I roam,  
‘ In quest of him, long absent from his home.’

‘ I too have left my realm,’ the seer replied,  
‘ By me, a native of my country, died.  
‘ His numerous brothers, and brave friends remain ;  
‘ And fear’d at Argos the Achæans’ reign.  
‘ From these, avoiding fate and death, I fly,  
‘ Since such, henceforth, on earth my destiny.  
‘ Take me on board, the suppliant’s prayer revere,  
‘ Save, or I perish, their pursuit draws near.’

Telemachus replied—‘ Here peaceful stay,  
‘ I shall not drive thee from my ship away :  
‘ Follow our fate, I ne’er will thee forsake,  
‘ And thou whate’er our island yields, partake.’

He spake, and then receiving from the seer  
Extended on the deck his brazen spear,

Pass'd to the stern, and deign'd his guest to guide,  
And seated him in safety by his side.  
They loosed the cables, and with ready hand  
Arranged the tackle at their chief's command,  
In the mid space upraising fix'd the mast,  
And bound, with many a coil of cordage, fast,  
Then with well-twisted ropes stretch'd out the sail,  
While blue-eyed Pallas sent the favouring gale  
That freshen'd as it blew, and thro' the deep  
Swift wing'd the ship with unrelaxing sweep.  
The sun was set, and thro' the darken'd wave  
Urged on by Jove the bark nigh Phera drave,  
And hallow'd Elis where the Epeians reign,  
And the sharp isles that pinnacle the main;  
Yet doubtful, if the prince should death elude,  
Or captured, perish by vile fraud subdued.

That time, the king, Eumæus, and each hind  
That served Eumæus, at the banquet join'd,  
And when their thirst and hunger sunk allay'd,  
The wary chief to prove his host essay'd,  
If yet he there would press his further stay,  
Or onward to the city urge his way.

‘ Hear me, Eumæus! ye, his household, hear!  
‘ On to the town, when morn's new rays appear,



‘ Fain would I go, and beg my daily bread,  
‘ Lest I annoy you by your bounty fed.  
‘ But deign, I pray, instruct me, and provide  
‘ A faithful leader there my path to guide,  
‘ Where I must wander thro’ the streets, if there  
‘ Some may scant dole of bread and water spare.  
‘ And I will seek Ulysses’ palace gate,  
‘ And to his prudent queen my tale relate,  
‘ Then, mingling with the haughty guests, implore  
‘ Some crumbs, perchance, from their superfluous store.  
‘ Whate’er they wish, my service can afford;  
‘ Mark what I utter, no vain-glorious word,  
‘ By Hermes’ will, who glory gives and grace  
‘ To every labour of the human race,  
‘ None can in useful toils with me contend,  
‘ To cleave the arid logs, the fire to mend,  
‘ To carve, to cook, with wine to crown the board,  
‘ And all that slaves can do to serve their lord.’—

Eumæus, thou in rage repliedst, ‘ O guest :  
‘ Why hast thou, such, so rash a thought express’d ?  
‘ No doubt, unhappy man !—’tis thy desire  
‘ Amid the throng of suitors to expire,  
‘ Whose daring insolence, and lawless might  
‘ Have risen from earth, and reach’d heaven’s starry  
height.



‘ Not such their servants : theirs a youthful choir,  
‘ Gay vests, and tunics form their rich attire.  
‘ Who serve their pleasure, and their feasts prepare,  
‘ Trick their bright forms, and smooth their perfumed  
    hair ;  
‘ And the fine polish of their festive board  
‘ Shines with choice wine and viands richly stored.  
‘ But—stay. Thy presence here can ne’er molest  
‘ Me, or my household : stay, a welcome guest.  
‘ Wait till the son of my high-honour’d lord  
‘ Return once more to Ithaca restored,  
‘ Then shall his vest, his tunic thee attire,  
‘ And his sail waft thee at thy own desire.’

‘ May Jove,’ he answer’d, ‘ love thee, as I love,  
‘ Thou who hast made me cease to mourn and rove.  
‘ No grief more wretched than the wanderer’s woe,  
‘ Where’er he strays, encreasing miseries flow,  
‘ Forced by dire pangs of hunger far to roam,  
‘ Prey to mischance, without a hope or home.  
‘ But since thou bidst me his return await,  
‘ Say of Ulysses’ mother, what her state ?  
‘ And of his father, whom, of him bereft,  
‘ Weak on the threshold of old age he left.  
‘ Yet live they, and behold the light of day,  
‘ Or have their souls to Hades pass’d away ?’

‘ Hear the strict truth. He breathes the vital air,  
‘ Yet pours to Jove for death his daily prayer,  
‘ So bitterly affliction’s piercing dart  
‘ For lost Ulysses rankles in his heart,  
‘ And loss of her, beloved in virgin prime,  
‘ A grief that brings on age before its time.  
‘ She perish’d for her son in direst death ;  
‘ So may no friend of mine e’er lose his breath.  
‘ While yet she lived, tho’ still with grief o’ercast,  
‘ Sweet was to me the hour in converse pass’d ;  
‘ For me with matchless Ctimena she bred,  
‘ The youngest daughter of her nuptial bed ;  
‘ Loved me and kindly rear’d from boy-hood time,  
‘ And when we both had gain’d youth’s blooming prime,  
‘ Won by rare gifts, in all her virgin charms  
‘ She sent the maid to bless a Samian’s arms ;  
‘ But me with splendid cloak and tunic graced,  
‘ And round my feet, with beauteous sandals laced,  
‘ She sent afield to guard her rural store,  
‘ Yet seem’d tho’ absent there to love me more.  
‘ Her kindness I regret : yet favouring heaven  
‘ Has to my prosperous cares large riches given,  
‘ Hence I my daily food, and drink supply,  
‘ And give the good due hospitality.  
‘ But there kind word nor deed now greet me more,  
‘ Since ’neath that roof a pest devours her store,

‘ Those haughty chiefs. Yet servants much rejoice  
‘ Their mistress to accost, and hear her voice,  
‘ There eat and drink, and, back-returning, bear  
‘ Some grateful gift that cheers and lightens care.’

‘ Ah! thou wert yet a child,’ the chief replied,  
‘ When thou far-sever’d, left’st thy parent’s side ;  
‘ But, tell me truly, did the ruthless foe  
‘ Lay, where thy parents dwelt, the city low ?  
‘ Or thee, ’mid flocks and herds when wandering lone  
‘ Waft in their ship to foreign isles unknown,  
‘ And to the house of him thy honour’d lord  
‘ Sell thee for no inadequate reward ?’

‘ Since thus thou ask’st,’ Eumæus said, ‘ my friend,  
‘ Sit silent, drink thy wine, and pleased attend.  
‘ Long are these nights, sleep claims of these a share,  
‘ Another part for grateful converse spare.  
‘ Seek not thy couch—it fits not, ere the hour :  
‘ O’er sleep immoderate steals a noxious power.  
‘ But—let the rest, if grateful to their mind  
‘ Go, and enjoy the hours to sleep resign’d,  
‘ Then rise at dawn, and freshen’d with their fare  
‘ Follow the swine, and tend their daily care,  
‘ While o’er our cups we sole beneath the roof  
‘ Taste of sad tales the sweet and bitter proof :

‘ For sweet to dwell on toils and perils pass’d  
‘ Traced thro’ the soothing veil by memory cast.  
‘ But now what thou requirest, attentive hear,  
‘ All truly utter’d to thy friendly ear.

‘ There is a far famed island, Syria named,  
‘ Above Ortygia, for a dial famed  
‘ That marks the solar tropics : less renown’d  
‘ For size than for fertility of ground,  
‘ For herds, flocks, wines, and wheat. A blissful place,  
‘ Where famine, nor disease consumes our race ;  
‘ But Dian, there, and Phœbus’ silver bow  
‘ With gentle arrows lay the aged low.  
‘ In that luxuriant isle two cities rise,  
‘ And shared by these the realm divided lies :  
‘ But lord of both, the king who gave me birth,  
‘ Ctesius Ormenides, a god on earth.  
‘ There with bright toys, and many a trinket fraught  
‘ Phœnicia’s crafty sons their vessel brought :  
‘ That time, a skilful, stately, beauteous maid,  
‘ Phœnissa named, my sire’s command obey’d,  
‘ Her, as she laved, by winning love seduced  
‘ A sly Phœnician flatter’d, and abused ;  
‘ Such the love-flatteries that sly wooers weave,  
‘ And credulous women, e’en the wise, deceive.

‘ He, who she was, enquired, and where her home,  
‘ Nor loth she told him her parental dome—

‘ In Sidon, famed for brass, I boast to trace  
‘ From wealthy Arybas my noble race,  
‘ There Taphian pirates seized their helpless prey  
‘ As thro’ the fields I homeward wound my way.  
‘ Then sold me to this lord, a household slave,  
‘ Who for my purchase no slight treasure gave.—

‘ And wouldst thou not, her lover said, once more,  
‘ Borne in our vessel, seek thy native shore ?  
‘ And greet thy sire’s, and mother’s high-roof’d dome,  
‘ Who prosperous, yet enjoy their wealthy home ?—

‘ Most willingly, if all devoutly swear  
‘ Ye to my hearth will me uninjured bear.—

‘ They, as she bade them, swore : then once again,  
‘ Phœnissa thus address’d the listening train :—

‘ Be silent, sirs, nor yet in yonder street,  
‘ Nor by the font accost me, if we meet,  
‘ Lest the king hear, and with suspicious mind  
‘ His slave in painful fetters closely bind,



‘ And plot your ruin : but, strict caution keep,  
‘ And when full fraught your vessel seeks the deep,  
‘ Be, where I serve, the furtive message told,  
‘ And I will bring whate’er I can of gold,  
‘ And fain will pay you with a richer fare,  
‘ The child whom I have rear’d, the royal heir,  
‘ A boy sharp-witted, who can run at large,  
‘ Your ship shall bear away this precious charge.  
‘ Where’er you sell him, in what distant land,  
‘ His purchase shall enrich your roving band.—

‘ She spake, and homeward went. A year they staid,  
‘ And to their ship the merchandize convey’d.  
‘ But when for sail the ship was fully fraught,  
‘ A messenger to her the signal brought,  
‘ A skilful wight who to the palace came  
‘ Bearing a necklace round whose golden frame  
‘ Glow’d amber studs. Enchanted at the sight  
‘ While the queen handled it with strange delight,  
‘ Proffering a price, on her a glance he cast,  
‘ Then quick returning to his vessel pass’d.  
‘ She led me forth, and in the fore-court found  
‘ The festive board with wine and victuals crown’d  
‘ For the king’s guests, who now had left the place  
‘ And in the forum met the assembled race.

‘ ’Twas then Phœnissa underneath her vest,  
‘ Hid, hurrying on, three bowls that served the guest.  
‘ I follow’d, void of thought : when now the day  
‘ Sunk in the twilight shade, and dimm’d the way,  
‘ We to the illustrious harbour quickly sped,  
‘ Where the ship floated on its liquid bed.  
‘ All enter’d in : and now we cut the wave,  
‘ While favouring Jove the gale propitious gave.  
‘ Six days we onward sail’d, all day, all night,  
‘ But when Jove brought the seventh-ascending light,  
‘ The archeress Artemis Phœnissa slew,  
‘ Who breathless in the hold, down headlong, flew  
‘ Like a sea-coot : her corse they cast away  
‘ To the rapacious fish and whales a prey.  
‘ I, lonely, wept ; while to this friendly shore  
‘ The favouring winds and waves the vessel bore,  
‘ Where king Laertes bought me for his own ;  
‘ And thus I first beheld this land unknown.’

‘ Much thou hast grieved my heart,’ the king rejoin’d,  
‘ Thus dwelling on each woe by fate assign’d.  
‘ Yet unto thee the lord of earth and heaven  
‘ Has with thy lot of ill a blessing given,  
‘ For thou hast gain’d a house, whose generous lord  
‘ For thee a table spreads with plenty stored :

‘ Here thou in peace abidest, while lone I roam  
‘ O’er stranger lands without a friend or home.’

As thus they conversed, nor long time reposed,  
The bright-throned morn the gates of heaven unclosed :  
The prince’s friends then furl’d, nigh land, the sail,  
And lower’d the mast unconscious of the gale,  
Row’d to the port the ship, the anchors cast,  
And fix’d on earth’s firm bed the cables fast,  
Then on the margin of the main prepared  
The equal banquet, and the goblet shared.  
And now when thirst and hunger sunk suppress’d,  
The cautious prince his followers thus address’d :

‘ Haste to the town, there moor your bark again ;  
‘ I seek my shepherds, and the pastoral plain,  
‘ There all inspected, at the hour of eve  
‘ My palace shall its lord once more receive.  
‘ At morn my feast your labour shall repay,  
‘ And the full bowl and banquet crown the day.’

‘ Where, my loved son,’ the prophet then rejoin’d,  
‘ Where shall I go, where rest and refuge find ?

- ‘ Shall I their mansions seek who rule the state ?  
‘ Or straightway pass within thy mother’s gate ?’

- ‘ I, at another time,’ the prince replied,  
‘ Would send thee where we royally reside,  
‘ There nought would fail : but now avoid that dome,  
‘ When I, the lord, am absent from my home ;  
‘ Nor wilt thou there be welcomed by the queen,  
‘ The mourner by the suitors scarcely seen,  
‘ Beneath her upper chamber’s sacred roof  
‘ Apart in solitude still weaves her woof ;  
‘ But boldly to Eurymachus repair,  
‘ The prudent Polybus’ illustrious heir :  
‘ Him as a god all Ithaca reveres,  
‘ And who, high-graced beyond his proud compeers,  
‘ Would fain my mother to the altar lead,  
‘ And to the honours of my sire succeed,  
‘ But this alone Jove knows, if death’s fell power  
‘ Crush not these wooers ere the nuptial hour.’

While thus he spake, a hawk on stretch of flight,  
Apollo’s messenger swept o’er his right,  
Tore a grasp’d dove, and, scattering, as he pass’d,  
Betwixt the ship and prince the feathers cast ;

The prophet call'd the prince apart, and press'd  
His hand in his, and joyful thus address'd :

‘ Heaven sent yon bird that pass'd thee on thy right :  
‘ Soon as I saw I knew his augural flight ;  
‘ No race like thine more royally can reign,  
‘ And shall in Ithaca its state maintain.’

‘ So be the deed,’ replied Ulysses’ son,  
‘ Such as thy word has utter’d, fully done !  
‘ No stinted gifts shall then my love attest,  
‘ And thou be deem’d by all who meet thee, bless’d.’

Then to Piræus spake : ‘ Friend, truest found  
‘ Of all who sail’d with me, to Pylos bound,  
‘ Lead to thy house, and kindly entertain  
‘ This honour’d guest till I return again.’

‘ Prince,’ he replied, ‘ tho’ long thy stay, this guest  
‘ Shall ’neath my roof, where plenty fails not, rest.’

He spake, and climb’d the bark, and bade the band  
Ascend, and loose the cables from the land ;  
They on the benches sat, in order placed.  
The prince, meantime, his beauteous sandals laced,



And from the deck his lance brass-pointed bore,  
While the crew loosed the cables from the shore.  
They to the city sail'd. With rapid pace  
On sped the prince to that sequester'd place  
Where 'mid his countless herds Eumæus slept,  
And mindful of his lords their treasure kept.

THE SIXTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Telemachus arrives at the lodge of Eumæus. Ulysses, by command of Pallas, discovers himself to his son.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XVI.

Now in the lodge, Eumæus and his lord  
Had lit at morn the fire, and spread the board,  
And sent afield the swineherds, when around  
Ulysses' son fawn'd each rejoicing hound—  
They bark'd not as he came. The wary king  
Who saw them fawn, and heard his foot-step ring,  
Swift to Eumæus cried :

‘ Eumæus ! hear,  
‘ A friend of thine, or one well known draws near.  
‘ Bark not at him the dogs, but fawn around,  
‘ And—hark !—his steps still loud and louder sound.’

Scarce had he spoke, when, lo, his much loved son  
Stood in the porch : Eumæus onward run :

From his stretch'd hands the bowl o'erflow'd the floor  
As eagerly he rush'd the prince before,  
And kiss'd his head and hands, on which he hung,  
And his bright eyes, while tears of transport sprung.  
As a fond father clasps, ten years now pass'd,  
A son from distant lands return'd at last,  
An only son, born in life's latter years,  
And whose long loss had doom'd his age to tears :  
'Twas thus Eumæus clasp'd, and o'er and o'er  
Kiss'd him as 'scaped from death to life once more.

‘ Light of my day ! thou comest : thee, ne’er again  
‘ Since forth thou sail’dst to Pylos’ sandy plain  
‘ My heart dared hope to see. Come, feast my sight ;  
‘ Come, let me gaze on thee with new delight,  
‘ Thee ’neath my roof ; for seldom seen, the swain  
‘ And the farm lure thee to this distant plain,  
‘ The city thy abode ; with wary view  
‘ To watch the suitors and their baleful crew.’

‘ So should it be, my sire,’ the youth replied,  
‘ But now to visit thee I turn aside,  
‘ To learn if yet at home, by all adored,  
‘ My mother dwells, or weds another lord,



‘ The while the spiders o’er the unclothed bed  
‘ Of lost Ulysses their thick webs outspread.’

‘ Still in thy dome,’ Eumæus thus replied,  
‘ Thy mother dwells, an unaffianced bride,  
‘ Still, victim to her woe, all night, all day,  
‘ Consuming misery wears her life away.’

Then took the prince’s lance : when stepping o’er  
The stony threshold of Eumæus’ door  
As came the youth, Ulysses from his seat  
Rose to resign it, and his presence greet :  
The prince forbade :

‘ Rest on that seat,’ he cried,  
‘ Our host for me another will provide.’

Down sat the king, while for the prince’s bed,  
On the green twigs a fleece Eumæus spread ;  
And there before them many a charger brought  
From yestreen’s feast with roasted viands fraught,  
Heap’d in the baskets bread, and cheer’d their soul  
With temper’d wine that crown’d the ivy bowl.  
Facing the king he sat, while amply stored  
They gladly feasted at the rustic board.

And now when thirst and hunger sunk suppress'd,  
Ulysses' son Eumæus thus address'd :

‘ Say, whence this guest, and what the race they boast,  
‘ The men who steer'd this stranger to our coast,  
‘ For not on foot he came.’

‘ Hear, much loved youth !’

Eumæus answer'd, ‘ hear from me the truth.

‘ From spacious Crete the stranger boasts his race,  
‘ A wanderer o'er the world, from place to place,  
‘ So doom'd by heaven : and here, beneath my shed,  
‘ From a Thesprotian vessel lately fled,  
‘ Found shelter. On thy will his doom depends,  
‘ Before thee, prince ! the suppliant stranger bends.’

‘ Thy word,’ the prince replied, ‘ has pang'd my breast.  
‘ How shall my palace guard the invited guest ?  
‘ Few are my years, nor can my feeble hand  
‘ Him, who has dared to injure me, withstand ?  
‘ My mother wavers, whether to remain,  
‘ And the high honours of my house sustain,  
‘ Her lord revering, and the public voice,  
‘ Or on the noblest wooer fix her choice,  
‘ Him whose rich gifts shall for her state provide,  
‘ And lure her forth a voluntary bride.

‘ But I will give him, now thy welcomed guest,  
‘ From my rich stores a cloak and beauteous vest,  
‘ Nor shall a two-edged sword, and sandals fail,  
‘ Nor to return him to his realm, a sail.  
‘ But if thy will, detain him, and defend,  
‘ I here the clothes, and all subsistence send,  
‘ All kinds, to free thy cost. But turn aside  
‘ The stranger from the roof where I reside ;  
‘ Lest the insulting suitors mock his prayer,  
‘ While I but groan in unavenged despair.  
‘ In vain the bravest man would all assail,  
‘ Superior numbers must perforce prevail.’

‘ Since I may freely speak,’ the king replied,  
‘ It racks my heart that madden’d by their pride,  
‘ These scornful suitors, in thy palace, dare  
‘ Wrong such as thou, Ulysses’ royal heir.  
‘ Say, yield’st thou willingly, or warn’d of fate,  
‘ Heaven dooms thee victim of a nation’s hate ?  
‘ Or dost thou blame thy brethren, on whose aid  
‘ We most confide when direst wars invade ?  
‘ O were I, thus disposed, to youth restored,  
‘ Or now the son of that redoubted lord,  
‘ Or he himself return’d,—such hope I feel—  
‘ My head should fall beneath a stranger’s steel,

‘ If in the palace of Laertes’ heir,  
‘ My rightful vengeance should those wasters spare.  
‘ Or if their host should me unaided slay  
‘ On my own hearth, so pass my soul away,  
‘ Ere patiently behold such deeds unjust,  
‘ The daily growth of insolence and lust ;  
‘ The suppliant stranger by their scorn reviled,  
‘ The females ’neath the royal roof defiled,  
‘ His wine exhausted, gorged his plunder’d food,  
‘ And still their craving passions unsubdued.’

‘ Hear!’ the prince answer’d, ‘ I will all relate.  
‘ No wrath ’gainst me inflames the nation’s hate :  
‘ I blame no brothers, on whose faithful aid  
‘ We most confide, when direst wars invade.  
‘ Jove to our race but gave one heir alone :  
‘ Arcesias gave to light an only son  
‘ Laertes, from whose loins Ulysses rose,  
‘ And I from him sole-born to share his woes.  
‘ Therefore a thousand foes my dome defile,  
‘ All, whose proud sceptres rule each neighb’ring isle,  
‘ Dulichium, Samos, and Zacynthus’ bowers,  
‘ And all rough Ithaca’s assembled powers :  
‘ These woo my mother to the nuptial bed,  
‘ And riot, by my substance daily fed :

‘ And while my mother these detested ties  
‘ Accepts not wholly, nor at once denies,  
‘ They waste my wealth, and soon will me destroy,  
‘ If Jove confound not their unhallow’d joy.  
‘ But, speed Eumæus, tell the queen, once more  
‘ Her son returns unharm’d from Pylos’ shore.  
‘ Here I await thy coming: but alone  
‘ Be to the queen her son’s arrival known,  
‘ Not to the Achæans, in their mingled throng  
‘ Lurk those who would their prince unjustly wrong.’

‘ I know it,—thus, Eumæus! thy reply,—  
‘ I know thy meaning, prince! on me rely.  
‘ But shall I not, on way the truth disclose  
‘ To him who pines with still increasing woes,  
‘ Laertes?—He, tho’ bow’d with bitterest grief  
‘ For his lost son, sought in his farm relief,  
‘ And still with food and drink, whene’er inclined,  
‘ Refresh’d his body with the labouring hind,  
‘ But ne’er has tasted food or drink, ’tis said,  
‘ Since to far Pylos thee thy ship convey’d,  
‘ Nor look’d abroad, but heaving groan on groan,  
‘ Lies, while the wasting flesh betrays the bone.’

‘ It grieves my heart,’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ I may not now his sorrow turn aside.



‘ Ah! might our wish the accomplishment obtain,  
‘ I, foremost, would recall my sire again.  
‘ Speed forth, then hither haste : avoid delay,  
‘ Nor to Laertes’ farm direct thy way :  
‘ But to that mourner be the word convey’d  
‘ In secret by the queen’s entrusted maid.’

Then urged him forth. Eumæus, firm and fast  
His sandals bound, and to the city pass’d.  
Yet from the lodge as swiftly he withdrew,  
His step escaped not keen Minerva’s view.  
Onward she came, and seem’d in guise array’d  
A beauteous, skilful, and majestic maid.  
Ulysses saw her as she stood before  
The threshold of Eumæus’ open’d door ;  
But not the prince perceived her drawing near,  
For ne’er the immortals deign to all appear :  
The dogs perceived, yet bark’d not as she trod,  
But, whining, fled as conscious of the God.  
With meaning brow as Pallas gave the sign,  
The monarch understood the will divine,  
And left the lodge, and pass’d beyond the wall,  
Before her stood, and heard her gracious call :

‘ Son of Laertes ! ‘now ’tis time, impart  
‘ To thy brave son the purport of thy heart ;

‘ So seek the town, and weave, maturely plann’d,  
‘ Death and destruction to that impious band.  
‘ I will not long be absent : keen desire  
‘ Of righteous vengeance feeds Minerva’s ire.’

Then touch’d him with her golden wand, and wound  
A radiant vest and robe his limbs around,  
His heighten’d form with youth’s firm vigour fed,  
O’er his full cheek health’s bright suffusion spread,  
Curl’d round his chin his darkly-waving beard,  
Then—her high aim accomplish’d—disappear’d.

Him, entering in, the prince astonish’d view’d,  
And turn’d away his eyes by awe subdued,  
Lest he had seen a god, then thus express’d  
In swift-wing’d words the tumult of his breast :

‘ Far other now thou seem’st, than lately seen,  
‘ Far other now thy vesture, form, and mien :  
‘ Thou art a god. Be gracious, deign receive  
‘ The feasts and golden gifts thy votaries give,  
‘ And spare thy suppliants !’

‘ I,’ the king replied,  
‘ I am no god, nor yet in heaven reside :

‘ I am thy sire, for whom thy heart has bled,  
‘ Submitting to base men thy outraged head.’

He spake, and kiss’d his son, while tears bedew’d  
His cheek, till then by passion unsubdued.

The prince, who dared not thus at once confide,  
‘ Not thou Ulysses, thou my sire,’ replied,  
‘ A god thou art who flatters to deceive,  
‘ That my pierced heart may more intensely grieve ;  
‘ No man could thus devise by human skill,  
‘ None but a god so change the shape at will,  
‘ Now in vile rags bow’d down, with age oppress’d,  
‘ Now like a god, a dweller ’mid the bless’d.’

‘ Telemachus, not thus,’ return’d his sire,  
‘ Thus, beyond measure, wonder, and admire  
‘ Thy father now before thee : other none  
‘ Save me, Ulysses, shall accost his son.  
‘ I, such, am he, who in the twentieth year  
‘ Of woe and wandering in my realm appear.  
‘ This Pallas wrought, thus changed me, such her will,  
‘ Who could at once, whate’er her wish, fulfil,  
‘ Now bow’d me an aged mendicant, and now  
‘ Royally robed, in youth’s unfading glow :

‘ With ease, at pleasure, heaven’s immortal race  
‘ The sons of earth can honour or debase.’

He silent sat—While tears of rapture sprung  
The prince his arms around his father flung.  
Alike in both the sweet desire of grief  
Mix’d with each gushing tear a soft relief.  
Shrill rose their cry, nor less incessant heard  
Than loud lamenting of the parent bird,  
Eagle or vulture, from whose rifled nest  
Some churl has snatch’d her brood with unfledged breast.  
And thus the sun had on the mourners closed  
Had not the prince, first speaking, interposed.

‘ Thee hither, sire beloved, what vessel brought ?  
‘ The seamen, who ? from what far region fraught ?  
‘ For not on foot thou camest.’

The king replied—  
‘ Ne’er shall the truth from thee thy father hide.  
‘ Phæacia’s sea-skill’d race me safely bore,  
‘ Guides o’er the main of all who reach their shore,  
‘ Me lock’d in sleep to Ithaca convey’d,  
‘ And with the gifts they gave, securely laid,  
‘ Rich-woven robes, brass, and abundant gold,  
‘ That by the God’s advice yon caverns hold :

‘ And here I come, so Pallas gave command,  
‘ To root with thee those suitors from our land.  
‘ To me their names and numbers now disclose,  
‘ That I may know how strong and who my foes :  
‘ And deeply pondering, cautiously decide  
‘ If we alone can in ourselves confide,  
‘ Alone, unaided, all their power withstand,  
‘ Or seek fresh succour from some friendly band.’

‘ My sire,’ the prince replied, ‘ the voice of fame  
‘ For wisdom and for valour vaunts thy name,  
‘ Yet rash thy speech. In deep amazement lost,  
‘ I doubt how two can front so vast a host :  
‘ Not ten, not twenty suitors—more thy foes.  
‘ List while their numbers I at large disclose—  
‘ Chiefs fifty-two, Dulichians, on whose state,  
‘ Selected for their skill, six menials wait :  
‘ From Samos, four and twenty : twenty more  
‘ Achæan princes from Zacynthus’ shore :  
‘ Twelve of our island chiefs, with whom combine  
‘ The herald Medon, and the bard divine,  
‘ And skill’d by culinary art to gain  
‘ The feasters praise, two servants join their train.  
‘ War we with these combined beneath our roof,  
‘ Vengeance I fear will rue the bitter proof.



‘ Reflect—and, if thou canst, procure some friend  
‘ Whose willing spirit will our right defend’—

‘ Mark what I utter,’ then Ulysses said,  
‘ If, with her sire, Minerva deign to aid,  
‘ Say, need we other succour?’

‘ These suffice :  
‘ All powerful their defence,’ the prince replies.

‘ They will not long be absent from our side  
‘ When the keen conflict burns,’ the king replied,  
‘ When with the suitors, underneath our roof,  
‘ We clash in arms, and dare the battle proof.  
‘ Now go, and seek at morn thy home again,  
‘ And mingle with the wooers’ haughty train.  
‘ Me, there in after hour Eumæus leads  
‘ Like an aged beggar mask’d in ragged weeds :  
‘ And, if they wrong me, bid thy heart be still,  
‘ And bear with patience my inflicted ill :  
‘ If dragg’d they thrust me forth, if blow on blow  
‘ Should foully wound me, thy just wrath forego,  
‘ Bid them by gentle words their outrage cease,  
‘ Tho’ such will ne’er their insolence appease,  
‘ For fate hangs o’er them. But, thou timely taught,  
‘ Mark what I say in thy retentive thought,

‘ When Pallas, skill’d in counsel, deigns incline  
‘ My guided mind, my brow shall give the sign :  
‘ And, thou forewarn’d, where’er within the hall  
‘ A martial weapon lies, collect them all,  
‘ And in the upper room securely place,  
‘ And if mistrust come o’er that guilty race,  
‘ And urge enquiry, with smooth speech allure :  
‘ Say—from the soiling smoke I these secure,  
‘ Far other now the lustre of their light  
‘ Than when Ulysses join’d the Trojan fight,  
‘ Far as the flame has spread its sullyng steam,  
‘ The vapour has obscured their radiant beam :  
‘ Jove too with higher aim has me inspired,  
‘ Lest ye, by wine inflamed, and passion fired,  
‘ By mutual wounds the feast and courtship mar :  
‘ The presence of the weapon genders war.—  
‘ But leave, for our brave arms alone to wield,  
‘ For each alike, a sword, a lance and shield,  
‘ That, rushing on, the suitors we assail  
‘ When, awed by Pallas, their proud spirits quail.  
‘ Now, mark me, if thou art Ulysses’ son,  
‘ If in thy veins thy father’s blood-drops run,  
‘ Let none beneath my roof Ulysses know,  
‘ Tell not of me to soothe Laertes’ woe,  
‘ Let not my household, or Eumæus hear,  
‘ Nor the breathed rumour reach thy mother’s ear ;

‘ But we alone will first the women try,  
‘ And on what men we safely may rely :  
‘ Who honours us, and fears, or holds in scorn  
‘ Thee, such as thou art, from Ulysses born.’

‘ My sire,’ he said, ‘ the trial shall impart  
‘ What thy son’s nature, and unyielding heart :  
‘ Yet ne’er I deem this proof will us avail,  
‘ But thou again revolve it, lest we fail.  
‘ Vain, man by man exploring, vain that toil,  
‘ While ’neath thy roof, at will, the suitors spoil  
‘ And waste thy wealth. But try the female train,  
‘ Prove those who scorn thee, or unblamed remain.  
‘ Not now the servants prove :—in after hour :  
‘ When signs forewarn thee of Jove’s guardian power.’

Thus they : while tow’rds the town the vessel drew  
That bore from Pylos the returning crew,  
And when it gain’d the harbour’s depth profound,  
They placed it, firmly fix’d on stable ground.  
The servants took the arms, and naval store,  
And the rich gifts to Clytius’ mansion bore.  
But to Ulysses’ consort swiftly sent  
On grateful message now a herald went,  
Charged to relate that, by her son’s command,  
While he his farm had sought, the bark on land

Had safe return'd, lest bow'd by causeless fear  
Down her pale cheek the mother pour the tear.  
The herald and Eumæus on their road  
Met in like mission where the queen abode,  
And there the herald 'mid her female train  
Exclaim'd,—' O queen! thy son returns again.'—  
But—drawing nigh, Eumæus softly told  
All that the prince had charged him to unfold:  
Then, all his message faithfully reveal'd,  
Sped to his herds, and labours of the field.

Grief seized the suitors, who, with fear o'ercast,  
Beyond the wall that girt the palace, pass'd,  
And as they sat before the gates, the son  
Of Polybus, thus counselling, begun :

' My friends ! Telemachus has greatly wrought  
' A deed, beyond his power we idly thought.  
' Now launch our choicest vessel 'mid the deep,  
' With youths whose oars the ocean swiftly sweep,  
' So to our ambush bear the strict command  
' Back to their homes to haste, and rest on land.'

Scarce had he spoke the word, when backward turn'd,  
Amphinomus in the port the bark discern'd,

Furl'd was the sail, the crew yet grasp'd the oar,  
When, laughing, he exclaim'd,

‘ Search now no more,  
‘ Lo! there the ship: or warn'd by power divine,  
‘ Or they themselves amid the billowy brine  
‘ Beheld at distance his wide spread of sail,  
‘ The while they vainly toil'd to catch the gale.

He spake: the suitors hast'ning sought the strand,  
While the crew haled the vessel safe on land,  
And as the servants forth the arms withdrew,  
Their lords impatient to the council flew:  
None but themselves, none other, old or young  
There entrance gain'd, and sat the chiefs among.

‘ Woe—woe.’ Antinoüs cried, ‘ heaven’s guardian  
power  
‘ Has saved this youth from death’s impending hour.  
‘ Spy after spy, throughout the lingering day,  
‘ Watch'd on the mountains his returning way,  
‘ Nor ere from sunset till it rose again  
‘ Sleep closed the eye that watch'd him on the main.  
‘ But while our ambush waited for its prey,  
‘ A god home guided his untroubled way.



- ‘ But let our counsels now his death prepare,
- ‘ So that his foot no more evade the snare.
- ‘ Methinks, if he survive, we woo in vain :
- ‘ None shall his meditated object gain.
- ‘ The seeds of wisdom ripen in his mind,
- ‘ Nor is the nation all to us inclined.
- ‘ Prevent him, ere he here convokes the land :
- ‘ Not feebly will the prince our power withstand ;
- ‘ But fired by righteous rage, to all explain
- ‘ The death we dared design, but dared in vain.
- ‘ They will abhor the deed, and drive us hence
- ‘ In other realms to rue the dire offence.
- ‘ Prevent him, at his farm, or now on way,
- ‘ That we may share his substance, swiftly slay.
- ‘ To each his part, but let the queen retain
- ‘ Her royal seat, and there, new-married, reign.
- ‘ But if my words displease, and ye declare
- ‘ The prince shall live, and reign his father’s heir,
- ‘ Hence to your homes, his wealth no more consume,
- ‘ But each by nuptial presents learn his doom,
- ‘ And let the queen transfer her tempted love
- ‘ To him who most shall give, and heaven approve.’

He spake : all silent sat, till, thus address’d,  
Amphinomus to them his mind express’d,

The son of Nisus, who far famed o'er earth  
From king Aretias drew his royal birth.  
He led the suitors from the wheat-crown'd plains  
Where rich Dulichium's harvest glads the swains :  
His words most pleased the queen, for pure his mind :  
And thus he warn'd them :

‘ Not like you inclined,  
‘ I would not slay the prince : most dire the deed  
‘ If by our hands the royal lineage bleed.  
‘ But first consult the gods—if heaven approve,  
‘ And such the oracular decree of Jove,  
‘ I would myself—nay, urge you all, to slay ;  
‘ But if averse the gods, the gods obey."

His speech prevail'd : then forth the suitors went,  
And to Ulysses' hall their footsteps bent,  
Each to his splendid throne—But wisdom wrought  
In the queen's mind a deep and different thought.  
She would herself before the wooers stand,  
She knew the threaten'd death their malice plann'd,  
Warn'd by the herald Medon, who alone  
Had caught their counsel, and to her made known.  
With her attendant train the royal dame  
Where the proud suitors sat, indignant came,

And at the pillars of the high-roof'd hall,  
Gave o'er her glowing cheek the veil to fall,  
And thus rebuked Antinoüs :

‘ Swoln with pride,  
‘ Framer of ill, to deeds of death the guide :  
‘ Tho’, once the boast of all of equal years,  
‘ In thought and word surpassing thy compeers,  
‘ Not such thou wert—Why, madman! rashly dare  
‘ By secret murder slay Ulysses’ heir ?  
‘ Why scorn the suppliants who to Jove belong ?  
‘ Deep is the guilt to plan another’s wrong.  
‘ Hast thou forgot that here thy father fled,  
‘ A nation’s vengeance rushing on his head,  
‘ Enraged that he the Taphian plunderers join’d,  
‘ And wrong’d Thesprotia with our realm combined ?  
‘ Fain had they torn his heart, by wrath o’erpower’d,  
‘ And his vast wealth insatiably devour’d,  
‘ But great Ulysses staid them, still’d their strife,  
‘ Whose palace now thou spoil’st, and woo’st his wife,  
‘ And slay’st his son, and rack’st my heart with woe :—  
‘ But cease : and bid the rest their aim forego.’

‘ Icarus’ daughter ! dare in me confide,  
‘ Grieve not,’ the son of Polybus replied,

- ‘ Free from all fear thy spirit. Now on earth  
‘ None breathes, and none, henceforth, shall spring to  
    birth,  
‘ Who while I live, and move mankind among,  
‘ Shall thy loved son with hand unhallow’d wrong.  
‘ It shall be as I speak, or soon his blood  
‘ Down this firm spear shall pour its purple flood.  
‘ For oft thy lord, the city-wasting king,  
‘ Would seat me on his knee, and kindly bring  
‘ E’en to my infant hand, the tempting food,  
‘ And with delicious wine my lip embued,  
‘ Therefore most loved by me of all mankind  
‘ Telemachus lives rooted in my mind.  
‘ None let him dread, no suitor’s murderous hand—  
‘ But who, what mortal, can a god withstand ?’

Eurymachus thus framed his fraudulent breath,  
While inly bent on meditated death.  
The queen her chamber sought, her lord to weep  
Till Pallas seal’d her lids in soothing sleep.

At eve Eumæus reach’d his lodge again,  
Where o’er a yearling porker freshly slain  
Their supper they prepared—The power divine,  
There Pallas went and wrought her great design,

Touch'd with gold wand the king, and, undiscern'd,  
Youth to old age, and robes to tatters turn'd,  
Lest glad Eumæus with o'erflowing heart,  
Should to the queen the untimely truth impart.  
The prince first spake :

‘ Eumæus, thou art come,  
‘ What news—what bring'st thou from the city home ?’

Eumæus, thou repliedst : ‘ As there I went,  
‘ Such cares, such questions cross'd not my intent.  
‘ One my sole aim, the message to unfold,  
‘ Then homeward quickly speed, that message told :  
‘ But, as I went, a herald of thy crew  
‘ My speed preventing to thy mother flew,  
‘ And all reveal'd. Yet, hear what met my sight :  
‘ Where towers beyond the town the Hermæan height,  
‘ I saw a ship that many a warrior bore  
‘ Descend into the port, and moor on shore,  
‘ Bristling with shields and spears : that host, methought,  
‘ Yet knew I not, thy life in ambush sought.’

He spake : while secretly the prince, unseen  
By kind Eumæus, with expressive mien,



Smiled on his sire. Then, as the labour ceased,  
Each at his leisure shared the equal feast :  
And when keen thirst and hunger sunk subdued,  
Still rest, and soothing sleep their strength renew'd.



THE SEVENTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Telemachus, on his return, relates to his mother a summary of his expedition. Ulysses, disguised as a beggar, in company with his guide Eumæus, is, on his way, abused by the goatherd Melantheus. He is recognized by his favourite dog Argus. Eumæus, after an interview with the queen and Telemachus, returns to his lodge.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XVII.

Soon as the roseate dawn had darkness chased,  
On his fair feet the prince his sandals laced,  
Grasp'd the strong spear firm-fitted to his hand,  
And to Eumæus gave his last command ;

‘ Father ! I seek the town, and leave the plain,  
‘ So may my mother see her son again,  
‘ Till then her spirit ne’er will rest in peace,  
‘ Nor gushing tears, nor deep lamenting cease.  
‘ But thou, I charge thee, to the town proceed,  
‘ And there, this wretched guest, the beggar leave :  
‘ Some one, who wills, may bread and water give ;  
‘ I cannot, such my misery, all relieve :  
‘ If this offend him, ’tis an added pain,  
‘ Yet I shall ne’er to speak the truth refrain.’



‘ My friend,’ Ulysses said, ‘ I too—’tis best—  
‘ Will seek the town, not here a burden rest,  
‘ Far better in the town than in the field  
‘ To beg my bread—who will, a mite may yield.  
‘ Not such my age, as at the farm, or stall  
‘ To answer at command the master’s call.  
‘ But go, the man thou badest, will guide my way  
‘ When fires have warm’d me, and when bright the day.  
‘ These tatter’d garments scarce my limbs infold.  
‘ Far off—they say—the town, and keen at dawn the  
cold.’

Forth from the lodge, the prince, impatient, went  
With hasty strides, on deeds of death intent :  
And now arriving where before the hall  
Tower’d the proud column at the palace wall,  
There fix’d his spear, then, entering, bounded o’er  
The stony threshold of his lofty door.  
Him first, as o’er the seats the fleece she threw  
His nurse, his Euryclea chanced to view,  
And weeping tow’rds him run, then, round him came  
All, every maid who served the royal dame,  
And kiss’d his head and front : then graceful seen  
Grand as Diana, fair as beauty’s queen,  
In haste the mother from her chamber pass’d,  
Round her loved son her arms entwining cast,

Kiss'd his bright eyes, and cheek, and fondly hung  
On his clasp'd neck while tears of transport sprung.

‘ Light of my life, thou comest, yet ne’er again  
‘ I deem’d to see thee, since athwart the main  
‘ Thy sail, unknown to me, to Pylos’ shore  
‘ Thee, to search out thy much-loved father, bore.  
‘ What thou hast seen, impart.’

The prince replied,

‘ Now my loved mother lay such thoughts aside,  
‘ Wound not with memory of pass’d toils my breast,  
‘ And let me, ’scaped from death, untroubled rest.  
‘ Thou, with thy maids, ascend thy upper room,  
‘ There bathe thy limbs, and radiant robes resume,  
‘ And vow selected hecatombs to heaven  
‘ When by consenting Jove due vengeance given.  
‘ I to the forum speed to greet once more  
‘ The guest I welcomed to my native shore,  
‘ Whom with my gallant friends I foremost sent,  
‘ And when I lone, and unattended, went,  
‘ I bade Piræus ’neath his roof retain,  
‘ And honour him till I return’d again.’

He spake :—not vain the word—the queen obey’d,  
Laved her fair limbs, and in bright robes array’d,

And vow'd selected hecatombs to heaven  
When by consenting Jove due vengeance given.  
The prince his palace left and grasp'd his spear,  
And two fleet mastives join'd his swift career.  
O'er him celestial grace Minerva cast,  
And all the people wonder'd as he pass'd.  
Round him the suitors gather'd, smooth their tongue,  
But on their secret souls death darkly hung.  
Ulysses' son join'd not their haughty throng,  
But graceful sat his father's friends among,  
Where Mentor, Antiphus, his council join'd,  
And Halitherses long to him inclined.  
They freely question'd him—then, near them press'd  
Piræus leading his entrusted guest  
On to the forum. As they caught his view  
Not from their presence long the prince withdrew,  
But nigh them gracious stood: when, thus address'd,  
Piræus first his friendly mind express'd:

‘ Prince, from my mansion bid thy females bring  
‘ To grace thy stores the gifts of Sparta's king.’

‘ Piræus, who,’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ Can deeds to come unerringly decide ?  
‘ If me by secret guile the suitors slay  
‘ Beneath my roof, they lot my wealth away :

‘ Far rather thou, my friend, the gifts retain ;  
‘ But if by me they perish, rightly slain,  
‘ Then to the throne of thy rejoicing king,  
‘ Thou too, rejoicing, these vast treasures bring.’

He spake, and led the stranger to his home :  
And now when reach’d the stately structured dome,  
They on the seats their mantles quickly cast,  
And to the bath’s refreshing luxury pass’d.  
And when the maids had laved, and smooth’d with oil,  
And richly robed them with the fleecy spoil  
And graceful tunic, from the bath they stepp’d,  
And on the banquet seats their station kept.  
From a gold ewer on a silver stand  
A maid the water pour’d, and laved their hand,  
And the bright table placed, which largely spread  
With various viands and abundant bread,  
The female steward served : and there the queen  
Beside the dome’s majestic columns seen  
Fronting the feasters, on her throne reclined,  
And with light touch her spindle smoothly twined.  
At will they revell’d : and when thirst had ceased,  
And hunger now subdued declined the feast,  
‘ My son,’ she spake, ‘ I now ascend alone  
‘ The widow’d couch that echoes back my groan,



‘ And by my tears polluted from that hour  
‘ Ulysses left it for fell Ilion’s tower :  
‘ Yet ne’er hast thou, tho’ much I long to learn,  
‘ If ought thou heardst, told of thy sire’s return,  
‘ Ere here yon suitors throng.’

The prince replied:

‘ Ne’er shall thy son from thee a secret hide.  
‘ We first to Pylos, Nestor’s empire, sail’d,  
‘ Who in his stately dome his guests regaled.  
‘ And as a father views once more the face  
‘ Of a loved son long reft from his embrace,  
‘ Thus he received me, and while I remain’d,  
‘ With his brave offspring kindly entertain’d.  
‘ But of Ulysses, if alive or dead,  
‘ No mortal had to him a rumour spread.  
‘ He sent me forth : his chariot sped my way  
‘ Where Menelaus held o’er Sparta sway.  
‘ ’Twas there the Argive Helen I beheld,  
‘ For whom the Greeks and Trojans, war-impell’d  
‘ By heaven’s high will, sore toil’d. But when he sought  
‘ What urgent cause my step to Sparta brought,  
‘ And I the truth unfolded, swiftly sprung  
‘ This exclamation from his scornful tongue :—

‘ Base dogs ! vile cowards ! ye, whose worthless head  
‘ Would fain find slumber on a hero’s bed.



‘ As when a doe within a lion’s lair,  
‘ Has dropp’d her twins, and left the sucklings there,  
‘ Then roams o’er fern-clad heights, or strays for food  
‘ Thro’ grassy glades that wind amid the wood,  
‘ While the gaunt beast on his defenceless prey  
‘ Springs where they sleep, and rends their limbs away;  
‘ Thus shall he slay them—O ye powers above!  
‘ Apollo, Pallas, and thou father Jove,  
‘ O! were he such, as when in Lesbos’ sight  
‘ He challenged Philomelides to fight,  
‘ And as Greece joy’d, on earth the wrestler flung,  
‘ So might he rush those wooing lords among;  
‘ Brief would their courtship be, and bitter prove  
‘ The tempting fruit of ill-requited love.  
‘ But what thou warmly woo’st me to reveal,  
‘ That, and much more, I will not now conceal,  
‘ All that the Ancient of the main disclosed,  
‘ All shall by me be faithfully exposed.  
‘ The seer—he told me—had thy father view’d  
‘ Lone in Calypso’s isle, by woe subdued,  
‘ Slaved by the enchantress’ power, his efforts vain  
‘ To greet his realm, his Ithaca again;  
‘ For nigh her coast, seaman, nor sail, nor oar,  
‘ To waft Ulysses to his native shore.  
‘ Thus spake the king—This heard, I homeward went,  
‘ While favouring heaven the breeze propitious sent.’

His words intensely moved her troubled breast,  
When Theoclymenus the queen address'd :

‘ Thou, honour’d wife of great Laertes’ heir,  
‘ Truths to that king unknown hear me declare,  
‘ Such boldly I presage.—Thou! most adored,  
‘ Jove! god of gods!—Thou, hospitable board!  
‘ Hearth of Ulysses on whose faith I stand!  
‘ Be witness, that Ulysses on this land,  
‘ At rest, or wandering, hears these impious deeds,  
‘ And meditates the course where vengeance leads.  
‘ Such the clear augury heaven deign’d unfold,  
‘ And such on voyage to thy son I told.’

‘ Were this consummated,’ the queen replied,  
‘ Thine be each gift that friendship can provide;  
‘ Then all should envy thee.’

Thus they—The while  
Before the gate, their leisure to beguile,  
The suitors hurl’d the lance, the discus flung  
On the smooth floor where oft their brawls had rung.  
But, for their banquet, when, as wont, the swains  
Led on the sheep from the surrounding plains,

The herald, who their favour chiefly gain'd,  
And to administer their feast remain'd,  
Medon, thus spake :

‘ Youths ! satiate with your sport,  
‘ Pass to the hall, and leave the outer court :  
‘ Let us prepare the feast—To bathe the sense  
‘ At times in festive joy is no offence.’

They heard, and rising up, his call obey'd,  
And on the thrones and seats their mantles laid,  
Slew the choice sheep, prime goats, and shed the gore  
Of the grazed steer, and many a fatted boar,  
The feast providing.—Then, along the plain,  
Went forth Ulysses, and the faithful swain.

‘ Go, since thou wilt,’ Eumæus said, ‘ now, guest,  
‘ The city seek, for such my lord’s behest.  
‘ Yet I had rather thou hadst fix’d thy stand,  
‘ Guard of the cattle on this peaceful land.  
‘ But I obey, his word I duly fear :  
‘ The master’s sharp rebuke ’tis pain to hear.  
‘ Come, let us speed, the day’s mid hour is pass’d,  
‘ And keen the cutting of the evening blast.’

‘ I know, I comprehend,’ the king replied,  
‘ Thou speak’st to one not senseless : go, my guide,  
‘ Lead on : but give a staff my foot to stay,  
‘ For slippery, so ’tis said, our onward way.’

Then ’thwart his breast the tatter’d wallet flung  
That on a leathern twist its patches hung.  
Eumæus gave his staff—They onward sped,  
And left the swains and dogs to guard the shed.  
The guide led on Ulysses to the town  
In form a mendicant by age bow’d down,  
And leaning on his staff, while round him cast,  
The rent rags flutter’d pervious to the blast.  
And now they pass’d along a rugged road  
Where a clear fountain nigh the city flow’d,  
A polish’d cistern for the public made  
By Neritus and king Polyctor’s aid,  
And ancient Ithacus : there circling round  
Fed by the rill, a grove of alders wound,  
From the high rock down burst the prone cascade,  
And grateful travellers oft their offerings laid  
On the nymph’s altar, that sublimely stood  
Crowning the cliff whose brow o’erarch’d the flood,  
There Dolius’ son, with two attendant swains,  
Led his choice goats the prime of all the plains,

Feast for the suitors. As the scoffer view'd,  
His taunts the beggar and his guide pursued,  
And rough and rudely his contemptuous jest  
Roused the stern spirit in Ulysses' breast.

‘ Lo! how the vile,’ he cried, ‘ the worthless lead :  
‘ Like mates with like : so Jove himself decreed.  
‘ Where lead’st thou, swineherd, this voracious beast,  
‘ This beggar, this polluter of the feast ?  
‘ ’Gainst many a post the wretch his back shall wear,  
‘ Nor swords nor tripods earn, but scanty fare  
‘ From scatter’d morsels. Swineherd, wouldst thou yield  
‘ This wretch to sweep my stall, or from the field  
‘ Bring for my kids fresh leaves, tho’ fed on whey  
‘ Superfluous flesh would soon his limbs o’erlay.  
‘ But since, intent alone on deeds of ill,  
‘ No work of honest labour suits his will,  
‘ He tramps the streets his sluggish paunch to load,  
‘ And craves for daily bread by chance bestow’d.  
‘ But hear what shall be done—If rough and rude  
‘ This vagrant on Ulysses’ hall intrude,  
‘ His ribs shall shatter many a foot-stool, cast  
‘ From the proud revellers at their rich repast.’

He spake, drew near, and with insulting pride  
Kick’d the king’s hip, yet turn’d him not aside.



Ulysses stood in doubt his skull to smash  
With his stout staff, or downward breathless dash ;  
But, master of his mind, repress'd his ire,  
While stern Eumæus, fill'd with generous fire,  
Fiercely rebuked the wretch, and high in air  
Raised his clasp'd hands, and thus pour'd forth his prayer :

‘ Daughters of Jove ! ye Fountain Nymphs divine !  
‘ If e’er Ulysses at your sacred shrine  
‘ The flaming thighs of kids and lambkins laid,  
‘ Involved with fat, be now his gifts repaid !  
‘ Some god here lead the hero in his might ;  
‘ Then, wretch ! thy pride shall quail beneath his sight :  
‘ Then still’d the taunts, that thou from street to street,  
‘ Wont’st in proud insolence of heart repeat,  
‘ The while, untended in the distant plain,  
‘ Perish the flock of the unfaithful swain.’

‘ Dog ! what thy speech ?’ Melanthius quick replied,  
‘ Skill’d but in cunning, versed in nought beside.  
‘ Thee from this Ithaca athwart the main,  
‘ Thee will I bear, and barter thee for gain.  
‘ And may the God, the silver-bow’d, this day  
‘ Pierce his loved son, or him the suitors slay,  
‘ As now Ulysses from his native shore  
‘ Has fallen at distance to return no more.’

Then left them pacing slow : but onward bent  
Swift to the royal dome Melanthius went,  
And with the suitors mix'd, and face to face  
Sat nearest him most loved of all their race,  
The proud Eurymachus : and there his board  
With flesh the minist'ring attendants stored,  
And the dispenseress of the household, spread  
His hunger to allay, the abundant bread.  
Now onward came Eumæus and the king,  
But staid the while they heard the echoes ring  
Of the melodious lyre, where rank'd among  
The high-born guests the heaven-taught Phemius sung.

The monarch clasp'd Eumæus' hand, and said,  
' Lo ! how Ulysses' palace stands display'd,  
' Loftily towers 'mid many a fabric known :  
' Part springs from part in just proportion shown,  
' The wall and battlements the court enclose,  
' And twofold gates all outward force oppose.  
' Guests throng the feast whose flavour floats around,  
' And, glory of the feast, sweet echoes sound  
' From the god-gifted lyre.'

' Thou well hast view'd,  
' Not senseless thou, nor in discernment rude,'

Eumæus thus replied, ' But, now attend :

' Think how our aim may gain successful end :

' Whether thou first shalt in the hall appear,

' And greet the guests, while I stay lonely here,

' Or thou remain, while foremost I proceed ;

' But—linger not as doubtful of the deed,

' Lest, seeing thee without, some scorner dare

' Smite thee, or thrust thee hence—Thy will declare.'

' I know, I understand,' the king replied,

' Thou speak'st to one not senseless—Go, my guide,

' Thou foremost go—here let me lone remain :

' I, not unused, can blows and stripes sustain :

' Patience my lot, for I have suffer'd sore

' In waves and wars : be this one hardship more.

' But none the pangs of famine can endure,

' Pangs that the wretch to baleful deeds allure,

' And arm the ships that sailing o'er the deep

' On distant foes war's sweeping vengeance heap.'

While thus he spake, his dog, his Argus heard,

His ears upraised, and caught his master's word,

Him who had rear'd, but could not long enjoy,

When call'd by Greece Ulysses sail'd to Troy.

Oft had the hunter chased, by Argus led,

The hind, and hare, and goat on mountains bred.

Now scorn'd in age, his master long away,  
He, gnaw'd by vermin, on a dung-heap lay,  
Ordure of mules and steers that fumed before  
The palace gates, ere spread the pastures o'er.  
Yet thus neglected, as on nearer view  
The faithful dog his much loved master knew,  
He with sunk ears, and tail soft wagging, strove  
More near to crawl, but could not nearer move.  
Struck at the sight, the monarch turn'd aside,  
Wiped off a tear, and thus address'd his guide :

‘ It moves my wonder—on a dung-heap lies  
‘ That dog, whose beauteous form attracts my eyes :  
‘ Yet—how affirm, that rapid in the race  
‘ His fleetness match'd his symmetry and grace ?  
‘ Or is he but like those that haunt the board,  
‘ Alone for beauty valued by their lord ?’

‘ His was that favourite dog,’ Eumæus said,  
‘ The chief on foreign land now breathless laid.  
‘ Were such his speed and strength, as in that hour  
‘ When first Ulysses sought far Ilion’s tower,  
‘ Thou hadst his fleetness and his force admired,  
‘ Whether in forest solitudes untired  
‘ Thro’ the dense depths he press’d the beast on chace,  
‘ Or keen in search, pursued the tainted trace.



‘ Ill treated now, his lord, at distance dead,  
‘ The women leave him on his loathsome bed.  
‘ ’Tis ever such : when lords no longer reign,  
‘ The menials right nor decency retain :  
‘ For half the virtue that the God-head gave,  
‘ The God resumes when man becomes a slave.’

He spake, and passing thro’ the palace gate  
Went where the suitors at the banquet sate :  
Then, in his twentieth year, as Argus eyed  
His much loved lord, he gazing on him, died.

Now, as Eumæus pass’d within the hall  
The prince to him made sign, and deign’d to call.  
Eumæus look’d around, and took the seat,  
Where wont the sewer rest who carved the meat,  
And placing nigh the prince, there shared the board  
By the attendant herald duly stored.  
Next came Ulysses, as with years oppress’d,  
A mendicant in vile and tatter’d vest,  
Propp’d on his staff, and bow’d his wearied weight  
On the ash threshold of the palace gate,  
And ’gainst a cypress pillar lay reclined,  
Smooth’d by fine art, and by the line defined.



The prince, Eumæus call'd, and, where he fed  
From the bright basket drew a loaf of bread,  
And meat as much as either hand could hold,

‘ Bear this,’ he cried, ‘ to him, the poor, the old,  
‘ And bid him to each guest prefer his prayer.  
‘ Shame suits not him who quests his daily fare.’

Eumæus went: ‘ there, hapless guest, receive :  
‘ Take what the gracious prince vouchsafes to give.  
‘ Go, at his bidding, pour to all thy prayer.  
‘ Shame suits not him who quests his daily fare.’

‘ Be thy kind lord,’ he answer’d, ‘ ever bless’d,  
‘ And thou, great Jove! consummate his request.’

Then grasp’d with either hand, and laid the meat  
On the vile wallet stretch’d before his feet,  
Then feasted while the minstrel sung, and ceased  
When ceased the minstrel to enchant the feast.  
The suitors shouted, brawling o’er their food,  
When, at Ulysses’ side, Minerva stood,  
And bade him beg his bread from all around,  
Try all, nor with the just the unjust confound—  
Yet none should ’scape her wrath. The king obey’d,  
And like a beggar stretch’d his hand, and pray’d

Passing from left to right.—Him all admired,  
Relieved his wants, and each from each enquired,  
‘ Who—whence the man ? ’

‘ Ye, who here woo the bride,  
‘ Illustrious lords ! ’ Melanthius thus replied,  
‘ I saw him by Eumæus hither led,  
‘ But know not whence, nor of what parents bred.’

He spake—then keen Antinoüs’ scornful tongue  
With sharp rebuke Eumæus’ spirit stung.

‘ Notorious swineherd ! why, within our hall,  
‘ To mar the festival, this vagrant call ?  
‘ Are there not others, many a beggar here,  
‘ More than enough to poison all our cheer ?  
‘ Guests here enough thy master to consume ?  
‘ Whence call’d this wretch to taint the banquet room ? ’

‘ Great as thou art,’ Eumæus thus replied,  
‘ Thou speak’st not well : why me thus wrongly chide ?  
‘ Who to the feast a stranger guest invites,  
‘ Save him whose rare endowment all delights,  
‘ Artist, or seer, or leech, or bard, whose song  
‘ Leads by celestial tones the heart along ?

‘ For such, o’er all the world, the board is spread :  
‘ But none woo him the wretch who begs his bread.  
‘ But thou, to all who to their lord inclined  
‘ Ulysses served, still haughty, still unkind,  
‘ Chiefly to me—it recks not, while the queen  
‘ And her brave son greet me with gracious mien.’

‘ Silence,’ the prince rejoin’d, ‘ nor idly aim  
‘ By force of words that scorner to reclaim.  
‘ His lip in bitterness of speech delights,  
‘ And his example all the rest excites.’

‘ No doubt, Antinoüs,’ thus the prince begun,  
‘ Thou treat’st me as a father treats his son,  
‘ Hence thy harsh word to drive away this guest :  
‘ But ne’er may Jove accomplish thy behest !  
‘ Dole him, at will : I care not—nay, ordain :  
‘ Fear not my mother, nor her menial train.  
‘ But thou thy pamper’d lust wouldst rather feed,  
‘ Than yield a morsel to another’s need.’

‘ What hast thou utter’d, proud, unyielding soul,’  
Antinoüs cried, ‘ what words, without controul ?  
‘ Were bountiful as mine, the gifts of all,  
‘ We three long months would lack this beggar’s brawl.’

Then took the stool, whereon his dainty feet  
Loll'd at the feast, and lifting o'er his seat  
Held it aloft. The rest their gifts bestow'd,  
And in the beggar's wallet pour'd the load  
Of bread and meat.—Then, where he lay before,  
On to the threshold of the palace door  
As the king went to taste their bounteous fare,  
He to Antinoüs first preferr'd his prayer :

‘ Give, my kind friend : thou, whose exalted mien  
‘ Like a proud monarch’s ’mid these feasters seen,  
‘ A larger portion, than the others, give,  
‘ That o’er the earth, thro’ me, thy largess live.  
‘ I too, ere while, a wealthy dome possess’d,  
‘ All strangers housed, and succour’d the distress’d,  
‘ Prompt at my call a thousand servants came  
‘ And all was mine that men most costly name :  
‘ But Jove confounded all : he sent the gale  
‘ That to far Ægypt wing’d my fated sail  
‘ By wandering pirates mann’d. In Ægypt’s flood  
‘ Securely moor’d my peaceful vessels stood.  
‘ Then I forewarn’d my comrades, left in charge,  
‘ Strictly to guard the ships, nor roam at large,  
‘ And bade my spies ascend the mountain crest :  
‘ They went, but reckless of their lord’s behest,



‘ In insolence of strength, and frantic pride  
‘ Spoil’d Ægypt’s fruitful fields, their race defied,  
‘ Their children, wives, enslaved, the natives slew,  
‘ Till to the town the cry of murder flew.  
‘ At morn their host rush’d down, and all the shore  
‘ Thunder’d with battle, and the brazen roar  
‘ Of horse and foot, while from the Olympian height  
‘ Jove lanch’d the bolt that turn’d my friends to flight.  
‘ None dared assail the foe, none stood their ground,  
‘ By danger and by death encompass’d round.  
‘ Some by the sword were slain, some captive led  
‘ To earn by toil their dole of servile bread.  
‘ Me they consign’d to Dmetor, Jasus’ heir,  
‘ Who o’er the Cyprians stretch’d his scepter’d care.  
‘ From Cyprus, thus by woe severe depress’d  
‘ I reach’d your isle.’—

‘ What fiend, thou banquet pest !  
‘ Here sent thee ? from my table stand aside,  
‘ Hence, wretch ! or now thou view’st,’ Antinoüs cried,  
‘ A bitterer Cyprus, and Ægyptian plain,  
‘ So frontless thou, and wearisome thy strain.  
‘ Sue all in turn, their gifts will freely flow :  
‘ No stint is theirs who others wealth bestow.’

The king stepp’d back, and said, ‘ Alas ! thy mind  
‘ Is with thy outward semblance ill-combined.



‘ Thou to the suppliant wouldst not salt afford  
‘ In thine own house, who, at another’s board  
‘ Where luxury revels in the regal hall,  
‘ Enviest the wretch the crumbs that downward fall.’

He spake : when boiling in Antinoüs’ breast  
Burst forth the word that thus his wrath express’d :

‘ Since thus ’gainst me thy insolent reproof,  
‘ Not now rejoicing shalt thou leave this roof.’

Then hurl’d on him the stool. The forceful shock  
His shoulder struck, but like a stedfast rock  
Unbending to the blow Ulysses stood,  
Stood mute, and shook his head, and mused on blood :  
Then went, and placed his wallet on the ground,  
Sat on the threshold, and, stern-gazing round,  
Spoke to the feasters :

‘ Ye who revel here,  
‘ Ye, suitors of the queen, to me give ear.  
‘ Not great the grief, when for his treasured store,  
‘ Or herds, or flocks that range the pastures o’er  
‘ Man feels the wound : but when for food I pray’d  
‘ For hunger oft to ill has man betray’d,

‘ Antinoüs struck me. Yet, if heaven defend  
‘ The poor, that chief to Hades shall descend  
‘ Before the nuptial hour.’

‘ Cease, brawler, cease,’

Antinoüs cried, ‘ thy pittance gorge in peace  
‘ Here, or begone, lest by these menials bound  
‘ By hand, or foot, dragg’d bleeding, wound on wound,  
‘ Thou from these walls art hurl’d.’

That menace moved

The youths, and thus their voice the chief reproved :

‘ Ill hast thou struck that hapless, houseless guest.  
‘ What—if some god, so mask’d, thy nature test ?  
‘ For oft the gods disguised at pleasure roam  
‘ From town to town like men without a home,  
‘ To judge the earth, and by experience prove  
‘ Who wrong commit, or right and justice love.’

Thus they—yet their reproof Antinoüs spurn’d.  
While with deep wrath the prince intensely burn’d  
For that vile blow, yet scorn’d a tear to shed,  
But mute, intent on vengeance, shook his head.  
She too, the queen, at rumour of that stroke  
That shamed her roof, thus, ’mid her maidens, spoke :

‘ So may the Archer God confound thy pride  
‘ Base wretch !’

‘ O might,’ Euronyme replied,  
‘ Might our breathed prayer consummate our desire,  
‘ Yon wooers, all, ere day-spring, should expire.’

‘ Yes, faithful nurse,’ Penelope exclaim’d,  
‘ Them I detest, all by vile deeds defamed,  
‘ But more than all, Antinoüs, dark as death.  
‘ Know, here a wanderer came, whose suppliant breath  
‘ Begg’d but for bread, by poverty compell’d :  
‘ The rest with ready gifts his wallet swell’d,  
‘ But this Antinoüs by mad pride betray’d,  
‘ With the hurl’d foot-stool bruised his shoulder blade.’

While in her chamber in indignant strain  
The queen thus spoke amid her menial train,  
And as Eumæus hasten’d to her call,  
Ulysses feasted in the banquet hall.

‘ Go, kind Eumæus, faithful friend,’ she cried,  
‘ The wandering stranger to my chamber guide,

‘ Fain would I ask of him who far has stray’d,  
‘ If aught his ear has heard, or eye survey’d  
‘ Of my loved lord.’

‘ Were those,’ he said, ‘ at rest,  
‘ Those wasters mute, whose brawls the feast molest,  
‘ Thou from that stranger’s word a tale shouldst hear  
‘ To soothe thy heart, and stay the starting tear.  
‘ Three days and nights I housed him in my shed,  
‘ For, first, when left his ship, to me he fled,  
‘ Yet ne’er throughout that time was found to fail  
‘ The unbroken tenour of his winning tale.  
‘ As when in transport at the minstrel’s song,  
‘ Gift of the gods that leads the heart along,  
‘ All hang insatiate on the enchanting lay,  
‘ Thus, melting me, he stole the hours away.  
‘ He said Ulysses was his father’s guest  
‘ Erewhile in Crete by Minos once possess’d;  
‘ Thence, ’mid sore toils, the wandering suppliant came,  
‘ And in reliance on the voice of fame,  
‘ Says that thy lord on rich Thesprotia’s shore  
‘ Breathes, and with gifts full-fraught returns once more.’

‘ Go, my kind friend,’ Penelope replied,  
‘ Him, face to face, to commune with me, guide.

‘ Let these proud wooers in the court rejoice,  
‘ Or revel in the hall, if such their choice,  
‘ They in whose mansions their own stores remain,  
‘ Viands and wines, or feed their servile train,  
‘ While for their banquet day succeeding day,  
‘ Our goats, and sheep, and bulls these wasters slay,  
‘ And quaff at will the wine, and all destroy,  
‘ For here no brave Ulysses mars their joy.  
‘ Were he return’d, beneath his righteous ire,  
‘ And his brave son’s, these spoilers would expire.’

Then loudly sneezed her son, and wide around  
As the roof echoed the auspicious sound,  
The queen Eumæus with glad smile address’d :

‘ Haste—hither bring, speed now the welcome guest.  
‘ Hear’st thou not that fair omen? death is nigh :  
‘ All, in their guilt, at once shall surely die.  
‘ This too be told—a robe and costly vest  
‘ If true his word, shall grace that stranger guest.’

Eumæus swiftly went :

‘ Go, aged sire,  
‘ The queen awaits thee : speed, at her desire :



‘ The mother of the prince, tho’ worn with woe,  
‘ Would fain from thee of her Ulysses know,  
‘ And to reward thee, a rich robe and vest,  
‘ If true thy word, her favour shall attest,  
‘ This thy chief want her bounty shall supply,  
‘ But thou on others for thy bread rely  
‘ As chance or choice may grant.’

The king replied,

‘ On me the queen may fearlessly confide.  
‘ Her lord I know : alike we suffer’d wrong :  
‘ Yet much I dread the suitors’ troublous throng,  
‘ Those, whose dire deeds have reach’d the Olympian  
    height,  
‘ Those, who but now dared me, a suppliant, smite,  
‘ And when without offence I onward pass’d,  
‘ E’en while I begg’d, ’gainst me a weapon cast :  
‘ Nor did Telemachus stretch forth his hand,  
‘ Or other guest Antinoüs to withstand.  
‘ Bid then the queen, tho’ urgent, there await  
‘ Till the slope sun has pass’d his western gate,  
‘ Then of her lord’s return at will enquire,  
‘ And seat me near her hospitable fire,  
‘ While, as thou know’st—for first to thee I came,  
‘ These wretched rags scarce clothe my aged frame.’

‘ Eumæus left him : and as soon as seen  
‘ He cross’d the threshold,

‘ Say,’ exclaim’d the queen,  
‘ How !—lead’st thou not the invited stranger here ?  
‘ What darts across his mind ?—Excessive fear ?  
‘ Does bashfulness his lingering step impede ?  
‘ A bashful beggar is a wretch indeed.’

‘ He rightly spoke what others might have thought,’  
Eumæus said, ‘ a word with wisdom fraught :  
‘ Fain would he shun the contumelious train,  
‘ And bids thee thy keen wish till night restrain.  
‘ For thee, ’tis fitter far, when day-light gone  
‘ To hold free converse, queen, with him alone.’

‘ He too,’ the queen replied, ‘ whoe’er that guest  
‘ Harbours no senseless spirit in his breast :  
‘ For never yet on earth’s capacious round  
‘ Were such base wretches, such insulters found.’

Then—to the queen his message thus declared,  
Eumæus to the wooers back repair’d,  
Drew nigh the prince, and bowing o’er his ear,  
Whisper’d the word, that none, save him, might hear.

‘ Friend, I depart, thy food and mine to guard,  
‘ Thou, for thy safety keep strict watch and ward :  
‘ First save thyself, and ponder in thy breast,  
‘ Lest death ensue, what treacherous foes infest,  
‘ How vast the host : yet ere thou feel their ire,  
‘ May all by Jove’s avenging wrath expire !’

‘ So may it prove !’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ But go, and when refresh’d at eventide  
‘ Speed to thy lodge ; thence at the dawn of day  
‘ Thy chosen victims to the feast convey.  
‘ The gods will guard me.’

To his polish’d seat  
Eumæus pass’d ; and cheer’d with wine and meat  
Went to his charge, and left the court and hall  
Fill’d with the feasters and their ceaseless brawl :  
Then dance and song, that from the daylight close  
Led on the revellers to their late repose.



THE EIGHTEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.



#### ARGUMENT.

Combat between Ulysses and Irus. Penelope receives gifts from the suitors. Eurymachus insults Ulysses. A general tumult, appeased by Telemachus and Amphinomus.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XVIII.

It chanced, a beggar of notorious fame  
For his voracious stomach, onward came,  
Still gorging, still insatiate. Vast his height,  
Bulk without bone, a giant but in sight :  
At birth, Arnæus call'd, but now alone  
By the nick-name of Irus wholly known,  
The common messenger. There, free to roam,  
He came to drive Ulysses from his home,  
And thus abused :

‘ Old man ! that threshold leave,  
‘ Lest by the foot dragg’d forth thou vainly grieve.  
‘ And—seest thou not those guests, whose winking lids  
‘ Urge me to drag thee forth ? But—shame forbids.  
‘ Up, lest we clash in fight.’

The monarch eyed  
With scornful glance the wretch, and thus replied :

‘ Wretch ! I nor speak thee ill, nor do thee wrong,  
‘ Nor envy what thou gain’st the guests among,  
‘ Tho’ large their gifts.—This sill can both contain :  
‘ Nor envy thou the dole that others gain.  
‘ Such as I am, thou seem’st—we beg our bread,  
‘ The gods at will their gifts on mortals shed.  
‘ Be still—provoke me not, lest rage ensue,  
‘ And I, thus aged, thy breast with blood embrue,  
‘ Then will to-morrow with propitious ray,  
‘ Bring on, to me at least, a peaceful day,  
‘ For thou, henceforth, this roof wilt ever shun,  
‘ Dome of Ulysses, great Laertes’ son.’

‘ Heavens !’ Irus cried, ‘ what has this glutton spoke ?  
‘ How chatter’d like a hag defiled with smoke !  
‘ Slave ! thee at will these hands shall sorely maul,  
‘ Thy broken grinders from thy jaws shall fall  
‘ Like a corn-plundering swine’s—Now, dare engage,  
‘ That all may see us—but, how combat wage  
‘ With one thy junior ?’

Thus they raged before  
The polish’d threshold of the lofty door :  
Their clamorous strife the proud Antinoüs heard  
Who insolently smiling spake the word :

‘ Ne’er have we witness’d, friends, so rare a sight :  
‘ The gods themselves vouchsafe us this delight.  
‘ Yon beggars—lo !—their threatening fists uprear :  
‘ Urge we the conflict—’twill enhance our cheer.’

All laugh’d, and round the tatter’d rivals drew,  
When the wing’d word from young Antinoüs flew :

‘ Hear me, my friends, where savoury steams aspire  
‘ From two goat-paunches fuming on the fire,  
‘ Full stuff’d with lumps of fat, and soak’d in blood,  
‘ Fit preparation for our evening food ;  
‘ Whoe’er shall conquer, let the man at will  
‘ Choose out his portion, and his hunger still,  
‘ And with us banquet, where the festive hall  
‘ Shall hear no other beggar’s troublous brawl.’

All heard well pleased : when, meditating guile,  
Ulysses’ shrewd reply conceal’d his wile :

‘ How with a younger can a man contend,  
‘ He whom to earth both age and misery bend ?  
‘ Yet me dire hunger’s ceaseless pangs provoke  
‘ To fight and fall beneath the o’erpowering stroke :  
‘ But bind your souls that none shall Irus aid,  
‘ Lest by your blow my limbs on earth be laid.’

Their souls the suitors bound—Then, thus address'd,  
The prince pour'd forth the fervour of his breast :

‘ Stranger ! since thy brave heart and spirit dare  
‘ Drive forth this troublous wretch, no more forbear ;  
‘ Fear thou no other foe :—who dares offend,  
‘ With many a just avenger shall contend.  
‘ I, who receive the strangers, guard their right.  
‘ With me, in this at least, the chiefs unite,  
‘ Antinoüs and Eurymachus.’

All heard,  
And all approved the prince’s manly word.  
Then round his loins his rags Ulysses roll’d,  
And bared to sight his thighs gigantic mould ;  
And his vast shoulders, and his breadth of breast,  
And arms whose rising muscles swell’d confess’d.  
Pallas each limb enlarged, and greatly gave  
Strength to the strong, and boldness to the brave :  
All, on the mighty man, all hung amazed,  
And loud burst forth their wonder, as they gazed :

‘ Irus, un-Irus’d, soon will sprawl on earth :  
‘ Age from yon rags bursts into giant birth.’



Thus they : while Irus' heart sank down with dread,  
When girding him, perforce the menials led,  
And his flesh quiver'd as with scornful look  
Antinoüs thus pour'd forth his stern rebuke :

‘ Would thou wert not, or that thou ne’er hadst been,  
‘ If, bulk of earth, thou dread, as soon as seen,  
‘ A man with weight of woe, and years oppress’d :  
‘ Wretch ! mark my word, that shall not idly rest,—  
‘ If by his arm subdued, thy efforts fail,  
‘ Thou to Epirus shalt in fetters sail  
‘ To Echetus, the king, earth’s common fear :  
‘ He shall cut off thy nose, and either ear,  
‘ And marring all thy manhood, cast away  
‘ To gorge his dogs the mutilated prey.’

That threat, as on they drew him, swell'd his fright,  
When front to front, they raised their arms for fight.  
Ulysses doubted, him at once to slay,  
Or with a blow less dire half breathless lay :  
Then curb'd his strength, lest Irus' deadly fall  
Should to their minds Ulysses' might recall.  
They clash'd : the wretch the king's right shoulder smote,  
But full on Irus' neck, and swell of throat,  
Beneath his ear the king's resistless stroke,  
With crashing sound the jaw bone inly broke.

Gush'd from his throat the blood : with dreadful yell,  
Down, prone on earth, the bulk of Irus fell :  
His teeth loud chatter'd, and his quivering feet,  
That knew no pause, the dust beneath them beat,  
While the guests toss'd their arms in deep delight,  
Half dead with laughter at the unseemly sight.  
The victor dragg'd him impotent to move,  
Along the vestibule and deep alcove,  
Then thro' the portal of the outward hall,  
Placed him reclined against the enclosing wall,  
And toss'd his staff into the beggar's hand,  
And thus at parting spake his stern command :

‘ There sit ; from hounds and swine defend the door :  
‘ Of beggars and of strangers king no more,  
‘ Vile as thou art and worthless : there be still,  
‘ Or on thy brow thou draw'st severer ill.’

Then the worn wallet round his shoulders flung,  
From whose loose rags a cord of leather hung :  
Back on the threshold sat, while inward press'd  
The laughing suitors, and thus cheer'd their guest :

‘ May Jove himself, and all the Olympian choir  
‘ Grant thee whate'er thy wish, thy heart's desire,

‘ Thou who hast driven this glutton from our hall,  
‘ And freed the public from his troublous brawl.  
‘ He to Epirus soon shall sail, consign’d  
‘ To Echetus the slayer of mankind.’

The grateful omen cheer’d Ulysses’ soul,  
The while Antinoüs gave the promised dole,  
The prize, the larger paunch of tempting food,  
Full stuff’d with lumps of fat, and soak’d with blood;  
Two loaves Amphinomus before him laid,  
Pledged from a golden bowl, and kindly said :

‘ Hail ! father, hail ! Be thou hereafter bless’d,  
‘ Tho’ now by multitude of woes oppress’d.’

‘ Amphinomus,’ the cautious king replied,  
‘ Thou rightly speak’st what wisdom seems to guide :  
‘ Such once thy sire, Dulichian Nisus named,  
‘ For wealth and virtue far and widely famed.  
‘ Thou too, methinks, art to his virtue, heir :  
‘ Therefore weigh well the word I now declare :  
‘ None that exist and breathe, and crawl on earth  
‘ Are weaker than the race of human birth.  
‘ Man fears no future ill, while favouring heaven  
‘ Gilds his fleet day, and youth and strength are given :

‘ But when the gods bring on the adverse hour,  
‘ His soul reluctant strives against their power,  
‘ And veers in mutability of mind  
‘ With every changeful day by Jove assign’d.  
‘ I once was bless’d, and in my father’s fame  
‘ And brethren trusting, lived a life of shame :  
‘ Therefore let none indulge his lawless mind  
‘ But patient bear the lot by heaven design’d.  
‘ Yet, here consuming all, the suitors dare  
‘ Flagitious deeds, and wrong the royal fair,  
‘ The wife of him who nigh his native land,  
‘ And wistful friends now rears the avenging hand.  
‘ Thee may the gods lead forth, ere thou engage,  
‘ When home the hero rushes in his rage :  
‘ For not in bloodless close the war will end,  
‘ When here the suitors and the king contend.’

Then, ere he drank, with wine the gods adored,  
And to the chief the golden cup restored.  
Amphinomus onward pass’d, with grief oppress’d,  
And bow’d his brow reclining on his breast,  
Presaging ill : but his presaging mind  
Could not the fate that Pallas link’d unbind.  
Thy spear, Telemachus, shall hear his groan :  
Thus doom’d, the chief sunk shuddering on his throne.

Now Pallas prompting the suggested thought  
In the queen's mind, another counsel wrought  
Their souls to fathom, and that more and more  
Her son and lord revere her than before.

‘Euronyme!’ the smiling queen exclaim’d,  
‘Tho’ ne’er till now my soul such purpose framed,  
‘Yet would I fain approach that hated race,  
‘And my loved son admonish, face to face,  
‘To shun the suitors whose deceitful breath  
‘Drops honey while their heart engenders death.’

‘What thou hast said,’ Euronyme replied,  
‘The word thou utter’st sense and prudence guide.  
‘Go—warn thy son of all: but, foremost, seek  
‘The cleansing laver, and anoint thy cheek.  
‘Clear from thy face each stain of tears away:  
‘Grief, ceaseless grief, brings premature decay.  
‘Look on thy son: the gods have heard thy prayer:  
‘Behold the bearded man, Ulysses’ heir.’

‘In vain solicitous,’ her mistress said,  
‘Thou wouldst, Euronyme, thy queen persuade.  
‘Speak not of baths and unguents—since that day  
‘Ulysses sail’d, heaven took my charms away.



‘ But haste, and here Hippodamia call,  
‘ And bid Autonoë seek with me the hall :  
‘ Not slight the shame ’mid that licentious band  
‘ To pass alone, and unattended stand.’

She spake : and strait Euronyme obey’d,  
And summon’d to the queen each faithful maid.  
But gracious Pallas otherwise disposed,  
And in sweet sleep the mourner’s eyelid closed.  
She downward sunk, and on her couch reclined,  
Loose hung her limbs, by sleep’s soft touch disjoin’d :  
The while the Goddess deign’d to her impart  
Celestial charms that fascinate the heart :  
Robed her with beauty whose ambrosial glow  
Beam’d like the charm on Cytherea’s brow,  
When the gay Goddess with fresh flowerets crown’d  
Weaves the light dance the Graces’ bower around ;  
Gave to her form a larger, loftier air,  
And made her more than sculptured ivory, fair.  
Then Pallas fled, and as the maidens came  
Their hasty step disturb’d the sleeping dame.  
Roused from sweet rest Icarius’ daughter woke,  
And brushing from her cheek the tear-drop, spoke :

‘ How in oblivious slumber slept my woes !  
‘ O that Diana, now, in such repose

‘ Would steal my life away, that I no more  
‘ Might, slow consuming, day by day deplore,  
‘ In vain regretting him, my long loved lord,  
‘ Him for each virtue by all Greece adored.’

Then left her upper room, and, where she went,  
Following the queen their steps two maidens bent.  
And now descending where the feasters sate,  
Between the columns of the lofty gate,  
Half hid beneath her veil’s transparent shade,  
Stood the fair queen, and at each side a maid.  
They look’d—they loved—o’er each enchanted soul,  
Tranced at her sight, a melting languor stole ;  
All fain had clasp’d her charms, when thus address’d,  
The mother to her son her grief express’d :

‘ My son ! thy sense, thy judgment die away :  
‘ More firm thy mind in childhood’s early day :  
‘ But now, at manhood’s goal, when every tongue  
‘ Might deem thy birth from royal lineage sprung,  
‘ Such thy proud size and beauty, now thy mind  
‘ Sinks, from its firm stability declined.  
‘ Think of Ulysses’ royal dome debased ;  
‘ The outrage unavenged has thee disgraced.  
‘ Beneath our roof, the festive guests among,  
‘ If on the stranger light or harm or wrong,

‘ On thee hereafter rests the undying scorn,  
‘ And thine the curse of mortals yet unborn.’

‘ Not with thee, mother,’ the wise prince replied,  
‘ I feel incensed, tho’ thou severely chide.  
‘ I can alike both good and ill discern,  
‘ Nor, as in childhood, need their difference learn ;  
‘ But cannot all forecast, for all provide,  
‘ Thus compass’d round by foes on every side,  
‘ Men who distract my mind, and vex my heart,  
‘ While aid or counsel none to me impart.  
‘ But their base will in that vile quarrel fail’d,  
‘ ‘Gainst Irus’ bulk, the stranger’s strength prevail’d.  
‘ Thou Jove ! thou Pallas ! thou Apollo, hear !  
‘ So might these wooers by just doom severe,  
‘ Bow down in dust, some in this festive hall,  
‘ Some o’er the hearth, but death alike on all,  
‘ As now that mendicant, that public pest,  
‘ With head hung down as one with wine oppress’d,  
‘ Before the outer gate, too weak to rise,  
‘ Or homeward crawl, all impotently lies.’

While thus they conversed, first, beyond the rest,  
Eurymachus the beauteous queen address’d :

‘ Could all behold thee who in Argos dwell,  
‘ How would thy courts with crowd of wooers swell,  
‘ Thy charms, thy stature, passing all thy kind,  
‘ And faultless as thy form, thy matchless mind !’

‘ Prince,’ she replied, ‘ whate’er I once enjoy’d,  
‘ Form, beauty, intellect, the gods destroy’d  
‘ When my loved husband, on fell war intent,  
‘ Far from his native realm to Ilion went.  
‘ Might he return, and rule his household state  
‘ How would on me transcendant glory wait !  
‘ Now lone I mourn, such direful woes o’erpower,  
‘ Still fresh on memory lives that bitter hour,  
‘ When on my hand he hung, and, ere to part,  
‘ Breathed the last word that glows within my heart :—

‘ Loved wife, not all our host will ere again  
‘ Return unwounded from Troy’s hostile plain :  
‘ Fame loudly vaunts the valour of our foe,  
‘ Skilful to lanch the spear, to bend the bow,  
‘ Mount the wing’d steed, and guide the thundering car  
‘ Whose onset soon decides the fate of war.  
‘ Heaven knows, if I return, or perish there ?  
‘ But thou, o’er all supreme dominion bear,  
‘ Still watch, as now, each aged parent o’er,  
‘ And—tend them, in my absence, more and more.

‘ And when thy son embrowns his manly cheek,  
‘ Wed whom thou wilt, and other mansion seek.—

‘ Thus spake my husband: what he spoke is done.  
‘ Soon will the night draw nigh, the unhallow’d one,  
‘ That drags me loathing to the nuptial bed,  
‘ And pours Jove’s wrath on my devoted head.  
‘ But this offends me, this unwonted shame,  
‘ This wooing that degrades the wooer’s name.  
‘ They who of yore were wont in rival strife  
‘ To court no worthless woman for a wife,  
‘ Or wealthy heiress, to obtain her love  
‘ Feasted her friends with many a fatted drove,  
‘ And with rare gifts the affianced beauty dower’d,  
‘ But ne’er unpunish’d her estate devour’d.’

So spake the queen, and what his consort spoke  
Fresh consolation in Ulysses woke.  
That thus she drew their gifts, and soothed their mind,  
The while his thoughts to deeds of death inclined.

‘ Icarus’ daughter!’ then Antinoüs said,  
‘ Be, if thy will, our gifts before thee laid;  
‘ Nor thou disdain them: graciously receive—  
‘ Yet ne’er the wooers will this mansion leave,



‘ Ne’er home return, or seek another land,  
‘ Till he who most deserves, has gain’d thy hand.’

The chiefs approved : and each with like intent  
A herald sped his offering to present,  
And strait his herald to Antinoüs brought  
A robe of wondrous grace, diversely wrought,  
Where twelve bright clasps, each clasp of burnish’d gold,  
With well-form’d eyes secured its ample fold.  
Before Eurymachus his herald placed  
A golden necklace with bright amber chased,  
That sun-like blazed. From thy recondite store,  
Eurydamas, two servants onward bore  
An ear-ring, each, where subtilely inlaid  
A triple drop with brightest brilliance play’d  
And round illumined all. Pisander’s slave,  
A collar worthy of a monarch gave.—  
All freely gave.—The queen her chamber sought,  
And the maids follow’d with those presents fraught.  
Then the gay guests with dance and dulcet lay  
Led on the hours till Hesper closed the day.  
But when late Hesper on their revels stole,  
They duly brought, to light afar the whole,  
Three braziers, each with many a log supplied,  
Hard, newly split, and by long seasoning, dried.

Nor torches fail'd, while band succeeding band,  
The attendant women took in turn their stand.

‘ Ye!’ thus the king address’d them, ‘ ye, who wait,  
‘ Ye, who once served your absent monarch’s state,  
‘ Go, and console your venerated queen :  
‘ There best the service of the female seen.  
‘ There comb the wool, the restless spindle turn ;  
‘ Be mine to feed the flames that brightly burn :  
‘ And if these revellers linger on till morn,  
‘ None shall these arms, long wont to labour, scorn.’

The females laugh’d, and in contemptuous pride  
The fair Melantho dared the monarch chide,  
Daughter of Dolius, to the queen endear’d,  
Graced by her gifts, and like her offspring rear’d ;  
Yet ne’er her mistress’ woe her pity moved :  
Alone Eurymachus the wanton loved.

‘ Thou wretched stranger!’ thus Melantho said,  
‘ By frenzy or by foolishness betray’d,  
‘ Thou wilt not slumber by the smithy’s fire,  
‘ Nor to the public portico retire,  
‘ But where the feasters mingle, rudely here  
‘ Chatter’st at will, nor feel’st respect or fear ;

‘ Or fumes of wine float round thy reeling brain,  
‘ Or, thou from nature, ever brawl’st in vain.  
‘ O’er vanquish’d Irus swagger’st thou?—beware—  
‘ Here one more stout than Irus shall repair,  
‘ Crush thy vile head, and bruising o’er and o’er,  
‘ Hence cast thee forth, polluted with thy gore.’

Her with fierce look Ulysses sternly eyed,  
And, ‘ Frontless woman,’ thus in rage replied,  
‘ I, to the prince, will make thy daring known,  
‘ And thy hewn limbs this outrage shall atone.’

The women, at this threat, in terrouer fled,  
And their knees trembled with foreboding dread,  
The while the king with unrelaxing sight,  
Look’d round, and watch’d, and fed each dying light,  
So seemingly to servile deeds resign’d  
While the great work of death fill’d all his mind.  
But Pallas suffer’d not the scornful train  
Long time their bitter insults to restrain,  
That each fresh outrage should fresh ire impart,  
And sharpen vengeance in Ulysses’ heart.  
And thus Eurymachus, with cutting joke  
That jeer’d the king, ’mid bursts of laughter spoke :

‘ Hear me, illustrious wooers of the queen !  
‘ No—not without a god, this man, I ween,  
‘ Here haunts. The torch-flame glistens from his head,  
‘ Where not a hair has power its growth to spread.’

Then turning to the king, thus scornful spake,  
‘ Wouldst thou for hire,—if thee I deign’d to take,  
‘ Sell me thy service in my distant plain ?  
‘ Not slight, my friend, thy recompense and gain.  
‘ There set the thorny fence, or plant the trees :  
‘ Then yearly nurture should thy need appease,  
‘ Thou shouldst be clothed, shoes too thy feet should  
    guard—  
‘ Yet these, I fear, to thee were no reward.  
‘ Ne’er wouldst thou work, long wont to deeds of ill,  
‘ But thy insatiate paunch by beggary fill.’

‘ I would, Eurymachus,’ the king replied,  
‘ That we by vigorous toil were fairly tried,  
‘ In springtide’s length of day, and in our hands  
‘ A scythe, low levelling the grassy lands ;  
‘ That we might prove our strength, till eve, unfed,  
‘ While the blade fail’d not on the unmow’d bed :  
‘ Or, urging on the steers to tame the soil,  
‘ Sleek, large, and fully fed to bear the toil,

‘ Steers of like age, like strength, whose well match’d  
force  
‘ Paced step by step, and closed, untired, their course,  
‘ The field four acres, where, on either side,  
‘ The glebe would lie as we the plough-share guide :  
‘ Then thou shouldst see how, gliding on, my yoke  
‘ Cleaves the strait furrow with continuous stroke.  
‘ Or if this day Saturnius war excite,  
‘ And mine a buckler fitted for the fight,  
‘ And mine two lances, and around my head  
‘ The well-form’d helm its brazen radiance spread,  
‘ Thou, in the van shouldst view me ’mid the slain,  
‘ Nor dare of my insatiate paunch complain.  
‘ But thou art scornful, thine a haughty mind  
‘ That deems thee far superior to mankind,  
‘ For thou consort’st with few, the weak, the vain,  
‘ Yet—if Ulysses here return again,  
‘ These gates, thus ample, would too strait appear  
‘ When thro’ the court thou rushest, wing’d by fear.’

Eurymachus with rage intensely burn’d,  
And swiftly thus the impassion’d word return’d :

‘ Wretch ! thou shalt suffer, such thy daring word  
‘ Thus rashly bolted, and by numbers heard.



‘ Wretch, void of reverence, wine has turn’d thy brain,  
‘ Or thou by native folly, weak as vain,  
‘ Thus ever idly rail’st.—Or swells thy pride  
‘ O’er vanquish’d Irus ?’

Ere the king replied,  
The insulter hurl’d the stool ; but as it flew,  
Low at Amphinomus’ knee the king withdrew :  
It miss’d its aim, but struck the dexter hand  
Of him who served with wine the festive band.  
The beaker with reverberating sound,  
Fell, as the man lay groaning on the ground.  
The deep alcove with clamour widely rung,  
While thus a voice burst forth from every tongue :

‘ Would that yon wretch had died ere hither brought,  
‘ And in our banquet such confusion wrought !  
‘ For him this contest—Wine nor food delight,  
‘ Vile, worthless brawls alone our souls excite.’

With awful grandeur that the strife repress’d,  
The indignant prince the brawlers thus address’d :

‘ Madmen !’ he cried, ‘ why thus infuriate rage ?  
‘ Fails then the feast this tumult to assuage ?

‘ Some god, no doubt, this turbulence excites,  
‘ And since the banquet now no more delights,  
‘ Go, fully fed, at home securely rest,  
‘ Go where you will, this arm shall none molest,  
‘ I drive none hence perforce.’

All heard, and held

Sad silence, and their heart in secret swell’d,  
The while they bit their lips, by wonder moved  
That thus the prince their insolence reproved.  
At length the son of Nisus silence broke  
And thus admonishing Amphinomus spoke :

‘ Let none, my friends, despitefully contend,  
‘ None against right and reason ought defend.  
‘ Strike not the stranger, nor unjustly wrong  
‘ Whoe’er here serves Ulysses’ train among.  
‘ Now, let the steward round the goblet bear,  
‘ That we may hail the gods, then home repair.  
‘ And let the stranger, here the prince’s guest,  
‘ Where first he shelter found, untroubled rest.’

He spake : his counsel soothed each haughty soul,  
And Mulius, tempering, crown’d with wine the bowl,

A herald of Dulichium, wont to wait  
On king Amphinomus, and crown his state :  
Each in his turn he served :—The gods they hail'd,  
Rich nectar cups the revellers regaled :  
Then, fully feasted, at the banquet's close,  
Each in his separate mansion sought repose.

THE NINETEENTH BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, with Telemachus, removes the arms into the upper chamber. His conference with Penelope. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar.



# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XIX.

Now, with Minerva, meditating blood,  
Death to the suitors, stern Ulysses stood,  
And thus his son address'd :

‘ No more delay,

‘ All the war-weapons from the hall convey :  
‘ And if the wooers should the cause enquire,  
‘ Thus answer, and elude their keen desire ;—  
‘ From smoke I free them : other now their light  
‘ Than when Ulysses join'd the Trojan fight.  
‘ Far as the flame has spread its sullying steam,  
‘ The vapour has obscured their radiant beam.  
‘ Jove too with higher aim has me inspired,  
‘ Lest ye by wine inflamed, and passion fired,  
‘ Through mutual wounds the feast and courtship mar.  
‘ The sight of weapons oft engenders war.’

He spake : Telemachus his sire obey'd,  
And to his nurse, kind Euryclea, said—

‘ Nurse, bid the females in their chamber stay,  
‘ That I within my room in order lay  
‘ My father’s arms, which in his absence rust,  
‘ With smoke polluted, and obscured with dust.  
‘ I was a child till now ;—mark thou my speech :  
‘ Yes—I will range them where no smoke can reach.’

‘ So rouse thy manly mind,’ the nurse replied,  
‘ To guard thy treasures, and thy household guide.  
‘ But—who accompanying shall bear the light,  
‘ Since they who should precede must shun thy sight ?’

‘ This guest,’ the prince replied, ‘ his bread shall gain,  
‘ None fed by me, shall here untask’d remain.’

Not vain his word. Then Euryclea closed  
The chambers where at rest the maids reposed.  
The monarch and his son now onward bore,  
And ranged in order all the warlike store,  
Helms, shields, and lances, while with guiding ray  
The guardian Goddess held before their way  
A golden lamp aloft, that widely cast  
Beams of surpassing splendour where they pass’d.

‘ My sire,’ the prince exclaim’d, ‘ a beauteous light  
‘ Where’er I gaze streams wondrous on my sight :  
‘ The walls, the fir-tree beams, all clearly seen,  
‘ Each lofty column, and each space between  
‘ Blaze as with flame. Some god that dwells on high  
‘ Here present leaves awhile his native sky.’

‘ Silence, my son,’ thus spake the wary sire,  
‘ Learn to restrain thy mind, nor more enquire.  
‘ The gods at times forsake their heavenly sphere.  
‘ Thou, to thy couch departing, leave me here,  
‘ That I may prove thy mother and her train,  
‘ And to her keen enquiries all explain.’

Then, where the torches round him splendour spread,  
The prince departing sought his peaceful bed  
Where slumber wont to soothe him : there he lay  
The dawn awaiting of the new-born day :  
The while the king, with Pallas left alone,  
Mused how the wooers might their guilt atone.

Then from her chamber, like Diana seen,  
Or golden Venus, came the graceful queen.  
Nigh the bright hearth her throne the menials placed,  
With ivory wrought, and silver interlaced,

Icmalius' work : a foot-stool stood beneath,  
And o'er it wide was spread a fleecy wreath.  
There as she sat, around the royal dame  
The attendant menials from their chamber came,  
Who from the hall removed the bread, and board,  
And the drain'd bowls so late with nectar stored :  
Then cleansed the hearths, and raked the dust away  
Where on the extinguish'd flames the embers lay,  
And on them heap'd afresh the billet wood  
That round the chamber light and warmth renew'd.  
There once again the queen's contemptuous maid  
Melantho dared her unknown lord upbraid.

‘ Thou, wretch ! here still ?—here lingering, as before,  
‘ With stealthy step on this deserted floor,  
‘ Still peering round with that suspicious eye  
‘ That wakes to watch our haunts, vile woman-spy !  
‘ Base wretch ! away :—go, gorge, without, thy meal,  
‘ Lest by this torch driven forth, thou writhe and reel.’

‘ Why,’ sternly eyeing her the king exclaim’d,  
‘ Why against me thy soul with wrath inflamed ?  
‘ Is it because in these vile tatters dress’d  
‘ I beg from all my bread by want oppress’d ?  
‘ Such are the mendicants.—Yet wealth of yore  
‘ Was mine, and mine the dome, whose open door

‘ Welcomed the wanderer, and the hungry fed,  
‘ Whoe’er the stranger, or wherever bred :  
‘ Mine, countless slaves, and all that serves the state  
‘ Of those, man envies most, the rich, the great :  
‘ But Jove has all destroy’d.—Thou, too, beware,  
‘ Lest thy frail charms in youth now blooming fair  
‘ Should cease to lure : beware the offended queen :  
‘ Beware—not slight our hope, tho’ now unseen,  
‘ Thy lord’s return : and if no more restored,  
‘ His heir, by Phœbus graced, your royal lord  
‘ Here reigns. No woman, none of evil fame  
‘ Shall here, unnoticed, glory in her shame.’

The queen his chast’ning heard, and thus replied  
In wrathful words that tamed Melantho’s pride :

‘ At least, thou shameless girl, thy vile misdeeds  
‘ Escape me not : such guilt just vengeance breeds.  
‘ ’Twas clear to thee, I to thyself made known  
‘ My will to commune with this man alone  
‘ Beneath my roof : so might I soothe my grief,  
‘ And, as I question, gain, perhaps, relief.’

Then call’d Euronyme, ‘ here quickly bring  
‘ A seat, and o’er it, for the stranger, fling



‘ An ample fleece, that he may there repose,  
‘ Hear all I ask, and tell me all he knows.’

As the queen spake, Euronyme obey’d,  
Placed the bright seat, and with a fleece array’d :  
There, nigh his consort, the much suffering lord  
Sat listening to the mourner’s searching word.

‘ Stranger, of thee I foremost now inquire  
‘ Whence art thou—what thy city—who thy sire ?’

‘ Queen,’ he exclaim’d, ‘ no mortal, none on earth  
‘ Could rightly blame thee, whose resounding worth  
‘ Has reach’d yon heaven : like one whose godlike sway,  
‘ Guardian of law, the good and great obey,  
‘ Whose fertile soil pours forth the golden grain,  
‘ Whose groves with fruit bow’d downward, load the plain,  
‘ Whose ocean swarms with fish, whose flocks increase,  
‘ And ’neath whose rule a nation dwells in peace.  
‘ But thou, I pray, of other things inquire,  
‘ Nor question what my realm, or who my sire,  
‘ Lest memory ope again each source of woe,  
‘ And crush a wretch bow’d down by many a blow.  
‘ Beneath another’s roof I may not groan,  
‘ And ceaseless weep o’er sorrows all my own,

‘ Lest that thy maids, or thou might’st haply say—  
‘ Lo! maudlin tear-drops down the drunkard stray.’

‘ Stranger,’ she spake, ‘ the gifts I once enjoy’d  
‘ Of mind, and face, and form, the gods destroy’d  
‘ When the Greeks sail’d to Ilion’s fatal coast,  
‘ And leagued with them Ulysses led his host.  
‘ Might he again return, with glory crown’d,  
‘ Thro’ him my fame would more and more resound.  
‘ Now here I mourn, such bitter woes o’erpower,  
‘ So the gods load with grief each passing hour :  
‘ For, all the rulers that Dulichium sway,  
‘ All whom Zacynthus’ wood-girt mounts obey,  
‘ Each Samos chief, and Ithacensian lord,  
‘ All woo me loathing, and all waste my board.  
‘ Hence I nor suppliants raise, nor guests regale,  
‘ Nor bid the friend of man, the herald hail ;  
‘ But sighing for Ulysses, pine away,  
‘ And while they urge the nuptials, frame delay  
‘ By many a wile. And first a vest I wove  
‘ Beneath my roof, so will’d the gods above,  
‘ Web of the finest woof, and amplest size,  
‘ And thus, dissembling, spake in specious guise :

‘ Youths, who here woo me, since Ulysses died,  
‘ Now urge me not, a forced, reluctant bride,

‘ Till for Laertes I have wrought a shroud,  
‘ Lest these vain threads to that last duty vow’d  
‘ Should waste away, ere slow approaching death  
‘ Shall close in age the hero’s sacred breath,  
‘ And mine the blame, if he, who much possess’d  
‘ Should lie unhonour’d with a funeral vest.—

‘ They all approved, and underneath the sun  
‘ I, day by day, the eternal web begun,  
‘ The eternal web that by the torch’s light  
‘ I ravell’d evermore night after night.  
‘ Three years my fraudulent labour I pursued,  
‘ But when the circling months the fourth renew’d,  
‘ The suitors came, warn’d by the unfaithful maid,  
‘ Surprised me in the fact, and dared upbraid.  
‘ Thus I, tho’ loth, the web perforce achieved,  
‘ Nor can I ’scape their suit, no more deceived,  
‘ No fraud now left. My parents bid me wed,  
‘ And my son views destruction widely spread,  
‘ While capable of rule his riper years  
‘ Fair flourish, graced by Jove above his peers.  
‘ But tell me what thy race, thy native earth,  
‘ For not from stocks and stones thy human birth.

‘ Wilt thou ne’er cease,’ Ulysses thus begun,  
‘ O wife revered of great Laertes’ son,

‘ Wilt thou ne’er cease my lineage to enquire ?  
‘ Yes—thou shalt hear, and satiate thy desire,  
‘ Tho’ I bow down when I retrace the tale  
‘ With woes more numerous than I now bewail :  
‘ So must it be, when from his native soil  
‘ One, like myself, long absent, worn with toil  
‘ Wanders from town to town, to want a prey :  
‘ Yet—since thou wilt, thy mandate I obey.  
‘ An island, Crete, from forth the ocean’s bed,  
‘ Fair, fertile, rears its wave-encircled head ;  
‘ There, countless numbers throng each peopled place,  
‘ And ninety towns scarce hold the mingled race.  
‘ Not one their tongue—Achæans here abound,  
‘ The native Cretans there, in arms renown’d,  
‘ Cydonians, and the Dorians’ triple band,  
‘ And the Pelasgi claim their separate land.  
‘ There, Gnossus, spacious town, where Minos reign’d,  
‘ Who for nine years a guest with Jove remain’d,  
‘ Sire of Deucalion, from whose loins I sprung,  
‘ And king Idomeneus, who famed among  
‘ The chieftains, sail’d with Atreus’ sons to Troy,  
‘ And left me, Æthon named, his youngest boy,  
‘ Idomeneus the elder and the best.  
‘ There I thy lord received, and graced my guest  
‘ With social gifts, when, bound to Troy, on Crete  
‘ A tempest from Malea drove his fleet,



- ‘ Drove to Amnisus, nigh Lucina’s cave,  
‘ In dangerous ports scarce ’scaped the o’erwhelming  
    wave.  
‘ Then, to the court, to greet his guest revered  
‘ He sought the king by social bonds endear’d,  
‘ But he, that time, ten days already o’er,  
‘ Had sail’d from Crete to Ilion’s hostile shore.  
‘ I then beneath my roof thy lord detain’d,  
‘ Whate’er was mine from me the hero gain’d,  
‘ He, and his comrades ; and to feast him more  
‘ Corn, wine, and bullocks from the public store.  
‘ Twelve days the Achæan host there fix’d their stand,  
‘ While the fierce north wind, ravaging the land,  
‘ Chain’d up the ships, and ceaselessly prevail’d :  
‘ The wind the next day fell, and forth they sail’d.’

Thus like the truth he wove a tale untrue,  
While at each word her tears unsolaced flew :  
As when by Zephyrus diffused, the snow  
Melts when the east wind sweeps the mountain brow,  
And melting swells the streams profusely fill’d,  
Thus down her cheeks swift tears on tears distill’d,  
Weeping her present lord : nor less her lord  
Wept in his heart the wife his soul adored ;  
But like stiff horn, or steel, within his lid,  
While art had power the flowing to forbid,



His eye stood tearless.—Then, in pause of grief,  
The queen, thus questioning, address'd the chief:

‘ Stranger! I fain would know by further proof  
‘ If thou didst feast that lord beneath thy roof,  
‘ Him and his gallant host: his dress declare,  
‘ His comrades, who, and what his form and air?’

‘ Full hard to tell,’ he said, ‘ forms long unseen :  
‘ Twice ten long years have roll’d their course between,  
‘ Since thence he went. Yet, thou shalt truly hear  
‘ How still he seems before me to appear.  
‘ His mantle, purple wool of double fold,  
‘ Held by two clasps that bound a brooch of gold,  
‘ Whereon a hound elaborately wrought,  
‘ Whose springing fore-feet, that its prey had caught,  
‘ Hung o’er a spotted fawn, that quivering heaved ;  
‘ All gazed in wonder by the art deceived,  
‘ How, wrought in gold, the hound had grasp’d its prey,  
‘ And the fawn, struggling, strove to flee away,  
‘ Strove palpitating. As the arid skin  
‘ That round the onion gleams, so smooth, so thin  
‘ His tunic like the sun’s meridian light  
‘ Shone, while the women wonder’d at the sight.  
‘ But—now attend, and let it fix thy thought :  
‘ I know not if from home the hero brought

- ‘ Those garments, or some comrade of the wave,  
‘ Or to his guest some chief the present gave ;  
‘ For dear to all thy lord, and ’mid our host,  
‘ He, above all, most loved, and honour’d most.  
‘ And I too gave thy lord a brazen blade,  
‘ And in a twofold purple robe array’d  
‘ That swept the ground, and when his ship he sought,  
‘ I him on way with honouring escort brought.  
‘ I too the herald’s figure will relate,  
‘ Who served, scarce older than himself, his state—  
‘ Dark hued, crisp’d locks, thick shoulder’d, such his  
    frame,  
‘ And answering to Eurybates’s name.  
‘ To him, above the rest, thy lord inclined,  
‘ For one their counsel, and consentient mind.’

Down her fair cheek each word fresh sorrow drew,  
Struck by the features of the forms she knew.  
And now exhaust with woe, when soothed her mind,  
The consort of Ulysses thus rejoin’d :

- ‘ My guest, thy woe erewhile my pity moved,  
‘ Now—welcome to my hearth, esteem’d, beloved.  
‘ Those beauteous robes, elaborately wrought,  
‘ I from my chamber to my husband brought ;

‘ ’Twas mine, this hand the brooch resplendent placed,  
‘ The bright adornment that the wearer graced :  
‘ But never shall I see that hero more,  
‘ Ne’er will his foot regain his native shore,  
‘ Foredoom’d to perish when the fatal gale,  
‘ Wing’d to the accursed town his parting sail.’

Then—‘ O thou queen adored !’ Ulysses cried,  
‘ Wife of Laertes’ son, thy consort’s pride :  
‘ No more afflict thy soul, and waste thy frame :  
‘ Yet how such deep affliction justly blame ?  
‘ Whoe’er has lost, bewails her wedded lord,  
‘ Her children’s sire, and whom her youth adored ;  
‘ Such is thy husband, known to all by fame,  
‘ And honour’d like the gods Ulysses’ name.  
‘ Yet cease from grief, and mark what I reveal,  
‘ I would not—not from thee, the truth conceal.  
‘ Hear what I heard importing his return,  
‘ What in Thesprotia’s land I chanced to learn,  
‘ Learn of him living, while from shore to shore,  
‘ From many a realm he swells his precious store.  
‘ Yet when the hero left Trinacria’s coast,  
‘ He lost his storm-wreck’d ship and all her host.  
‘ So will’d high Jove, and Phœbus’ wrathful power,  
‘ Whose bulls Ulysses’ comrades dared devour.

‘ They perish’d in the deep : but him on land,  
‘ As the keel floated, on Phæacia’s strand  
‘ The billows cast. There, graced like those in heaven,  
‘ Phæacia’s gifts to him were largely given :  
‘ Fain had they sent their guest uninjured home,  
‘ And here, ere now, the chief had hail’d his dome,  
‘ But that he will’d, yet wandering more and more,  
‘ Fresh treasures gather from each foreign shore.  
‘ For who, like him, such riches could obtain,  
‘ Or rival him in arts that lead to gain ?  
‘ Thus Pheidon, who Thesprotia’s realm controul’d,  
‘ At the libations in his palace, told.  
‘ He swore the crew was fix’d, and set the sail  
‘ To waft him home before the favouring gale.  
‘ But in a ship that to Dulichium went,  
‘ The king me foremost from Thesprotia sent :  
‘ And show’d me all Ulysses’ countless store,  
‘ Diffusing wealth ten generations o’er :  
‘ Himself—he said—to seek the shrine of Jove,  
‘ Where the oak answers from Dodona’s grove,  
‘ Was gone, inquiring how once more to gain,  
‘ Disguised, or openly, his native plain.  
‘ ’Tis thus :—thy lord is safe, and soon will come,  
‘ And hail his friends, and his ancestral home.  
‘ Witness, thou Jove supreme, of gods the God,  
‘ Witness, this hearth whereon my foot has trod,



‘ All, as I speak, shall happen.—Yea, this year  
‘ Beneath his roof Ulysses shall appear,  
‘ Now, ere this less’ning moon shall wholly wane,  
‘ And a new crescent light the world again.’

‘ Be thy word truth,’ Penelope rejoin’d,  
‘ Then thou shalt know my friendliness of mind :  
‘ Such and so vast my gifts, by all confess’d,  
‘ That they who meet, shall, envying, deem thee bless’d.  
‘ But other far the event. He comes no more,  
‘ Nor shalt thou hence regain thy native shore.  
‘ Not such the rulers who this household sway,  
‘ As when Ulysses bade the realm obey,  
‘ To each fit stranger kind reception gave,  
‘ Or with safe convoy waft him o’er the wave.  
‘ But ye, now lave my guest, prepare his bed,  
‘ With shaggy coverings, and bright tapestry spread,  
‘ There in warm slumber let him wait the day,  
‘ Then, bathed, anoint him, at dawn’s rising ray,  
‘ That in the hall, the guest my son may greet,  
‘ And share the breakfast nigh his honour’d seat.  
‘ Then woe to him who dares that guest assail,  
‘ Rage tho’ he may, his efforts all shall fail.  
‘ Else how to thee made known, how rightly held  
‘ That I in sense all woman-kind excell’d,



‘ If thou in ragged garment, loathed by all,  
‘ Unwash’d and foul, disgrace the festive hall.  
‘ Brief is the life of man ; who, harsh of mind,  
‘ In ruthless mood has ruthless deeds design’d,  
‘ A curse is on his life, and still when dead  
‘ That curse pursues him to his funeral bed.  
‘ But who is kind, and kindly feels, his fame  
‘ Thro’ all the world his grateful guests proclaim,  
‘ And name him bless’d.’

‘ O spouse revered,’ he cried,  
‘ Loved of Laertes’ son, Ulysses’ pride,  
‘ Bright rugs and robes are hateful to my sight  
‘ Since first I sail’d from Crete’s snow-mantled height.  
‘ Still let me lie, as oft-time laid to rest  
‘ Thro’ sleepless nights some sorry bed I press’d,  
‘ Where as each hour slow crept, I wakeful lay  
‘ And watch’d impatiently the dawn of day.  
‘ I covet not the washing of the feet ;  
‘ To lave my limbs thy dainty train unmeet.  
‘ None, save some matron, some time-stricken dame,  
‘ And wretched as myself, shall touch my frame :  
‘ Her I repel not.’

‘ Thou most welcome guest,’  
The queen replied, ‘ more dear than all the rest

‘ Whoe’er from distant realms my home have sought,  
‘ So wise thy words, with deep discretion fraught.  
‘ An ancient dame here serves, for worth endear’d,  
‘ She who my hapless husband nursed and rear’d,  
‘ She who received him from his mother’s womb,  
‘ Her hand, tho’ weak, its office shall resume,  
‘ And wash thy feet. Rise, Euryclea, rise,  
‘ Lave him whose years seem to my mournful eyes  
‘ Such as thy lord’s, his feet, his hands the same,  
‘ For woe soon turns to age the afflicted frame.’

The nurse close-veil’d with either hand her brow,  
And as she spoke her tears began to flow :

‘ Son, for thy sake grief wears me—on thy head,  
‘ Tho’ righteous, Jove has bitterest misery shed.  
‘ For who, like thee, has on his altars laid  
‘ Such flaming hecatombs, such offerings made ?  
‘ One still thy prayer, that thou, soft-bow’d by time,  
‘ Might’st rear thy son, and glory in his prime.  
‘ But Jove himself bars thy returning day,  
‘ And thee, a wanderer on thy distant way,  
‘ In foreign realms, beneath some stately roof,  
‘ Vile women scorn, and drive the wretch aloof,  
‘ As these have driven thee : this worthless race :  
‘ Whom, justly, thou avoiding the disgrace,

‘ Forbidst to touch thee. But this willing hand  
‘ Covets that duty by the queen’s command :  
‘ Yet not for her dear sake alone, but thine,  
‘ For anxious thoughts my soul to thee incline.  
‘ Yes—mark my word—By varying misery brought,  
‘ Full many a stranger here has refuge sought,  
‘ But like Ulysses, ne’er this eye has seen  
‘ One such as thou, in voice, in foot, and mien.’

‘ Yes, gracious dame,’ the prudent chief return’d,  
‘ They all, whoe’er have both our forms discern’d,  
‘ Struck by the features, have, like thee, declared  
‘ Our strict resemblance.’

Then the nurse prepared  
The radiant bath Ulysses’ feet to lave,  
And temper’d with the cold the boiling wave ;  
While nigh the hearth he sat half veil’d in shade,  
Lest as she touch’d him, by his scar betray’d,  
The nurse should all expose. She near him drew,  
And as she laved her monarch, straitway knew  
The scar that still the deep-flesh’d wound display’d  
Where the boar gash’d him in Parnassus’ glade,  
When to his famed maternal grandsire sent,  
Forth to Autolycus the stripling went ;  
Autolycus surpassing all mankind  
In guile and fraudful oaths : so Hermes dower’d his mind ;

The god to whom his goats and lambkins bled,  
And whose high power hung o'er his guarded head.  
When first to Ithaca's well-peopled ground  
The monarch came, the new born babe he found,  
Whom, on his knee as Euryclea laid,  
She, thus, at closing of the banquet, said,

‘ Lo ! thy child's new born child ; his name declare,  
‘ Name him whom thou hast gain'd by many a prayer.’

‘ Him, let his parents, as I name him, name :  
‘ Since, vex'd by many of either sex, I came,  
‘ Name him Ulysses :\* and when fit to roam,  
‘ Let the youth seek me in my stately dome  
‘ Nigh famed Parnassus, and from me receive  
‘ The gifts a grandsire's hand shall largely give,  
‘ So joyfully depart.’

Such gifts to gain  
The stripling journey'd to Parnassus' plain,  
And by Autolycus and all his race  
Was kindly clasp'd in many a warm embrace ;  
But most, his mother's mother on her breast,  
With many a kiss his eyes and front caress'd.

\* In the Greek ὀδυσσεύς from the verb ὀδύσσω—Irascor, I am angry.—COWPER.



The monarch bade his sons prepare the feast,  
A five-year'd bull, a sacrificial beast :  
And readily his sons the king obey'd,  
Dragg'd in the five-year'd bull, and slew, and flay'd,  
Sliced, and transfix'd with spits, and with nice art  
Skilfully roasting, sever'd part from part.  
The guests till sunset joyfully regaled,  
Nor aught that cheer'd the equal banquet fail'd.  
And when the darkness day's last glimmer closed,  
Each on his couch in peaceful sleep reposed.  
At the new dawn, on sylvan sports intent,  
The monarch's sons and young Ulysses went,  
Now hasting up Parnassus' wood-girt crest  
Along the breezy windings boldly press'd :  
But from the depth of the soft flowing main,  
When the sun cast his splendour o'er the plain,  
The hunters pass'd within a glade profound,  
Led by the guidance of the tracking hound :  
The king's sons follow'd, and in bold advance  
Ulysses cheer'd the dogs and waved his lance.  
There in the thicket of the mountain glade  
A boar enormous his dark lair had made :  
So dense its growth no wind that fiercely blew  
Could freely pass the unmoving covert thro',  
Nor the sun pierce it with meridian beam,  
Nor tempest pour within its driving stream,



So thick the covert ; while o'er all its bed  
Leaves heap'd on leaves their deep profusion shed.  
Roused at the rush of hunters and of hounds  
That track'd the monster to his inmost bounds,  
Swift from the thicket, bristling up his crest,  
With eyeballs flashing flame the monster press'd  
And stood before them : first, Ulysses sprung,  
Raised his long spear, and o'er the savage hung  
In act to wound him, when the impetuous boar  
With tusk obliquely smiting, gash'd and tore  
The flesh above the knee, yet miss'd the bone :  
But the brave stripling in his strength, alone,  
With his sharp lance the boar's right shoulder spear'd,  
Nor staid till thro' the flesh the point appear'd :  
On earth, fierce bellowing, dropp'd the monster, dead,  
While to the prince his comrades onward sped,  
Closed with soft hand the wound, and as it flow'd  
With incantation staunch'd the vital flood—  
Then led him to their father. There, at rest,  
The monarch and his children nursed their guest ;  
And when to health restored, rich presents gave,  
And joyful sent him joyful o'er the wave  
To greet his realm. There, question'd of the scar,  
He told his parents of that sylvan war,  
And how when hunting in Parnassus' glade  
With the king's sons, the boar that wound had made.

'Twas this, that when along the limb she drew  
Her hand to lave him, Euryclea knew.  
Strait as she felt it, down his foot she flung,  
And as it fell the brazen laver rung,  
And suddenly beneath the weight o'erpower'd,  
The bath on earth the o'erflowing water shower'd :  
Joy and keen grief at once her bosom wrung,  
Tears gush'd, and struggling passions chain'd her tongue :  
Then, as she fondly clasp'd him, ' thou, adored ;  
' Thou art, thou art, my son ! at length restored :  
' And yet, in sooth I knew thee not, before  
' This hand had touch'd, and felt the scar once more.'

She spake, and on his consort fix'd her eye,  
And fain had said, ' Behold thy husband nigh.'  
The while the queen, nor aught discern'd or knew,  
So Pallas from the scene her mind withdrew.  
The king's right hand his nurse's throat compress'd,  
His left close drew her, as he thus address'd :

' Why wouldst thou, nurse, destroy me ? on thy breast  
' I hung, and now by toils and woe oppress'd,  
' Twice ten revolving years at length pass'd o'er,  
' Here come revisiting my native shore.

‘ But since thus known to thee by heavenly will,  
‘ Be thou, lest others hear, be silent still :  
‘ And mark my word that shall not pass away,  
‘ By aid divine if I the wooers slay,  
‘ Tho’ thou my nurse, I shall not spare thy age,  
‘ When these vile women meet my righteous rage.’

‘ My child ! what word, thus hasty, thus unkind,  
‘ Has ’scaped thy lip,’ the prudent nurse rejoin’d,  
‘ Thou know’st my strength of mind, ’twill nought reveal,  
‘ Firm as a solid rock, or mass of steel.  
‘ And thou too mark my speech :—By heavenly might  
‘ If on these wooers thy just wrath alight,  
‘ I will beneath this roof the women trace  
‘ Who rightly serve, or who thy hearth disgrace.’

‘ Nurse, wherefore,’ thus Laertes’ son replied,  
‘ To me thus point them out ? I want no guide ;  
‘ I shall each one observe, and strictly prove :  
‘ Be silent thou, and leave the rest to Jove.’

Then the prompt nurse, her master’s feet to lave,  
Brought in another bath, and fresher wave.  
And when his limbs were oil’d, and wash’d his feet,  
The king drew nearer to the hearth his seat,

And closely with the rags his scar conceal'd,  
While thus her mind Penelope reveal'd :

‘ Fain would I still one question ask, my guest,  
‘ Ere yet comes on the hour of soothing rest :  
‘ How sweet to those who worn with daily grief,  
‘ In peaceful slumber find a sure relief :  
‘ Not such my state : so infinite my woes  
‘ That daily duties yield me no repose,  
‘ While in perpetual tears I joy alone,  
‘ And urge my maidens’ labours and my own.  
‘ But when night comes, and all at rest, I weep,  
‘ And load with woe a couch that knows not sleep,  
‘ While in my heart’s deep core, unsolaced care  
‘ And cureless grief my loathed existence wear.  
‘ As when Pandareus’ child, in vernal hour,  
‘ ’Mid the new leaves that blossom round her bower,  
‘ The youthful nightingale resumes her lay,  
‘ And wakes to breathe her soul in song away,  
‘ Swift varying her melodious warbles sweet  
‘ That still the dirge of Itylus repeat,  
‘ Her much loved son, the royal Zethus’ child,  
‘ Whom her rash fury had with blood defiled :  
‘ Not less I fluctuate, whether yet to stay  
‘ With my loved son, and guard with watchful sway



‘ My wealth, my household, and its ancient fame,  
‘ Honouring the people’s voice, the widow’s name,  
‘ Or, of these wooers, him the worthiest wed,  
‘ Him, whose large gifts best gain the nuptial bed.  
‘ My son, while yet a child, unfit to guide,  
‘ Was loth that I should leave his guardless side,  
‘ But now, in manhood’s might, regrets my stay,  
‘ While these fell spoilers on his substance prey.  
‘ Now, hear attentive, and my dream explain :—  
‘ Twice ten fair geese within my yard remain,  
‘ On wheat and water fed ; and still their sight,  
‘ Oft as I view them, seems to yield delight.  
‘ A wide wing’d eagle from the mountains flew,  
‘ And breaking all their necks, his victims slew :  
‘ They lay along the court-yard, heap on heap,  
‘ While the bird wing’d aloft his airy sweep.  
‘ I wept and groan’d in sleep :—as round me came  
‘ While sore I grieved, full many a bright hair’d dame,  
‘ The bird return’d, and on the palace crest,  
‘ Thus soothing me, with human voice address’d :

‘ Daughter of famed Icarius, dare rely :  
‘ No dream, a real vision meets thine eye :  
‘ All shall be done : the geese those wooers deem,  
‘ And I, but now an eagle in the dream



‘ Here as thy husband come : ’tis thus decreed,  
‘ By me beneath thy roof the wooers all shall bleed.—

‘ He spake—I woke, and in their trough again  
‘ Saw the fowl feeding on their wheaten grain.’

‘ O queen divine !’ the prudent chief replied,  
‘ How from the truth that vision turn aside ?  
‘ Ulysses self its issue deign’d relate :  
‘ All doom’d to death : not one shall fly from fate.’

‘ Dreams are inscrutable,’ the queen return’d,  
‘ Nor all that man conceives are there discern’d.  
‘ Two are the gates of sleep, this framed of horn,  
‘ The other portal ivory plates adorn :  
‘ The dreams that thro’ the ivory portal weave  
‘ Their trackless way, but issue to deceive :  
‘ But they that thro’ the polish’d horn arise,  
‘ Foreshow the future deed, and warn the wise.  
‘ But not from thence my dream, else, fair on flight  
‘ Had been to me and mine that shadowy sight.  
‘ Now mark my words : the fatal morn is come  
‘ That shall divorce me from Ulysses’ home.  
‘ I will the iron stakes for trial bring,  
‘ Which in his palace, oft the skilful king

‘ Wont in due order range, like props that stay  
‘ The ship ere launch’d along the watery way :  
‘ Thro’ these, the monarch standing far apart  
‘ Thro’ all their rings swift wing’d his feathery dart.  
‘ Be this the suitors’ trial. He, who best  
‘ Can bend the bow, and skill’d beyond the rest,  
‘ Thro’ the twelve rings can wing his arrowy flight,  
‘ Him will I follow to the nuptial rite,  
‘ And leave this dome, by all that bless’d me, dear,  
‘ Where, a young bride, I hail’d my happiest year,  
‘ This stateliest dome, o’erflowing with delight,  
‘ That still in dreams shall float before my sight.’

‘ Ulysses’ wife revered!’ thus spake the king,  
‘ Haste, haste, this contest to the suitors bring,  
‘ Or he shall come, ere these the bow can bend,  
‘ Draw back the cord, and thro’ the circles send  
‘ The levell’d shaft.’

Penelope replied—

‘ So wouldst thou here, thus seated at my side,  
‘ Thus cheer me, sleep would ne’er my eyelid close.  
‘ But how can man exist without repose ?  
‘ To all on earth, the inhabitants of heaven  
‘ To every man his fated lot have given.

‘ Now to my upper chamber I depart,  
‘ To my lone couch, deep anguish in my heart,  
‘ Still bathed in tears, since he on war intent,  
‘ To Ilion, the unutterable, went.  
‘ There will I lie : but thou here rest thy head,  
‘ Laid on the floor, or where they strow thy bed.’

Then duly follow’d by her female train,  
The queen ascended to her room again,  
There, mourning her Ulysses, woke to weep,  
Till Pallas closed her lids in soothing sleep.

THE TWENTIETH BOOK  
OF  
THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, disguised, in his palace, and doubtful how to act, is counselled and encouraged by Minerva. Jove, at his prayer, grants him propitious omens. Pallas smites the wooers at the banquet with insanity, while Theoclymenus presages their imminent destruction.



# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XX.

Now in the vestibule the king at rest,  
Lay on a mighty bull's rough hide undress'd,  
Spread o'er it many a fleece, and soft o'er all  
Euronyme wide cast the mantling pall:  
But sleep ne'er soothed him while his vengeful mind  
Death to the suitors ceaselessly design'd.  
Then from their chambers forth the maidens went  
With laughter loud and wanton merriment  
Each to her paramour. Within his breast  
Ulysses' heart burnt on his bed of rest.  
Dire was his conflict, thence, without delay  
To issue forth, and each vile woman slay,  
Or leave them to consummate their last sin—  
His heart in that dread struggle growl'd within—  
As when a dog, that wheels her puppies round,  
Barks at a stranger foot, on watch to wound:

Thus growl'd his spirit by such outrage moved,  
He smote his breast, and thus his heart reproved :

‘ Bear this my heart ! thou that hast worse endured,  
‘ That day, when in the Cyclops’ den immured,  
‘ He gorged thy friends—but thou didst all sustain  
‘ Till wisdom loosed thee from death’s circling chain.’

Thus he reproved, and his brave heart controul’d,  
While to and fro his restless body roll’d.  
As when a man, in haste, while flames the fire,  
Intent to satiate hunger’s keen desire,  
Turns a swoln paunch thick-fill’d with fat and blood  
Till the fierce heat has cook’d the savoury food :  
Thus roll’d he, pondering how his single hand  
Might wreak his vengeance on that haughty band,—  
He lone ’gainst many.—Then Minerva came  
And veil’d her heavenly form in woman’s frame,  
Stood o’er him, and thus spake :

‘ Of all mankind  
‘ Most wretched thou, why watch with tortured mind ?  
‘ Thy palace—this—thy wife there rests above,  
‘ And here thy son form’d for a father’s love.’

‘ Wise all thy words, O Goddess,’ he replied,  
‘ But these soul-piercing thoughts my heart divide,  
‘ How on these wooers loose my vengeful hand,  
‘ I, unassisted, ’mid that numerous band ?  
‘ Yet this more deeply wounds, if these I slay  
‘ By thine and Jove’s consent, where turn my way ?  
‘ Deign thou advise.’

‘ E’en in a mortal guide,  
‘ One his inferior far,’ the Maid replied,  
‘ A man has trust. I come a Goddess here,  
‘ I, who have saved, to save thee now appear :  
‘ And thus proclaim, if band on gather’d band,  
‘ If fifty armies should our course withstand,  
‘ All raging to destroy us, thou at will  
‘ Shouldst with their herds and flocks thy pastures fill.—  
‘ But sleep shall sooth thee—thro’ each nightly hour  
‘ To wake is troublous—sleep, and rise in power :  
‘ Thou soon shalt all subdue.’

Then closed in sleep

His wearied eye, and to Olympus’ steep  
The Goddess flew, when, as his eyelids closed  
His loosen’d limbs from toil and woe reposed.

Yet ne’er throughout that night his consort slept,  
But on her couch so soft, still woke and wept,

And when worn out with woe her tears she stay'd,  
Thus, first to Artemis the mourner pray'd :

‘ Daughter of Jove, dread Goddess ! in this heart  
‘ Now, while I call on thee, now plunge thy dart :  
‘ Let tempests whirl me thro’ the ethereal plain,  
‘ And cast their burden on the boundless main :  
‘ As storms famed Pandarus’ daughters swept from earth  
‘ When heaven had slain the authors of their birth.  
‘ Lone were the orphans left, but Venus’ care  
‘ With curds and wine and honey form’d their fare,  
‘ And Juno graced them o’er all womankind  
‘ With matchless beauty, and with gifts of mind,  
‘ Dian high stature gave, and Pallas taught  
‘ To weave the web with wondrous beauty fraught :  
‘ But when kind Venus in the realms above  
‘ Sought their bless’d nuptials at the throne of Jove,—  
‘ Jove, thunder-wielding God, who orders all  
‘ Both weal and woe that shall mankind befall,—  
‘ Then the fell Harpies bore them up, and gave  
‘ Each to a Fury, doom’d in hell to slave—  
‘ So may the gods destroy me, and the dart  
‘ Of Artemis transpierce my inmost heart  
‘ While dwelling on that lord I close my life,  
‘ Ere one less famed call me his wedded wife—

- ‘ But this is still endurable, when woe  
‘ Thro’ day’s long hours that forced the tear to flow,  
‘ In slumber rests : for when the eyelids close,  
‘ Both joy and grief forgotten find repose.  
‘ But heaven still racks my couch with dreams unbless’d :  
‘ Yes : one like him with me had nightly rest,  
‘ Such as the hero march’d in armed might :  
‘ No vision there, but truth rejoiced my sight.’

Thus, when Aurora golden-throned arose,  
Ulysses heard her as she wept her woes :  
Rack’d by strange doubts, it seem’d, that fully known  
She o’er him bent, and claim’d him for her own.  
Then gathering up the cloak, and fleecy pall,  
He spread them o’er a throne within the hall,  
But bore the bull’s hide forth, and thus to Jove  
Pray’d, raising up his arms to heaven above :

- ‘ Jove ! if o’er earth and sea, toil heap’d on toil,  
‘ The gods have led me to my native soil,  
‘ May some propitious voice beneath this roof,  
‘ And portent from without now yield the proof !’

Jove heard his prayer, and from the lucid brow  
Of high Olympus thunder peal’d below :



His heart rejoiced—and—strait a blissful sound  
Burst from a woman as the corn she ground,  
Burst near him, where Ulysses' mills arose,  
And twice six women toil'd till day-light close,  
Still grinding from the wheat and barley grain  
The floury meal man's vigour to sustain.  
The rest, the labour o'er, and heap'd the flour,  
Tired with the toil enjoy'd sleep's peaceful hour,  
One—weakest—still was left—she staid the mill,  
And to the king announced Jove's prescient will :

‘ Jove ! who o’er gods and men hast sov’reign sway,  
‘ And now hast thunder’d from heaven’s star-paved way,  
‘ A sky without a cloud, to some a sign,  
‘ Deign to my prayer, to me, a wretch, incline !  
‘ May these insulting lords, this day, the last,  
‘ Take in Ulysses’ dome their sole repast,  
‘ They, who have gradual worn my strength away  
‘ Labouring their meal, be this their final day !’

Struck by that omen, and Jove’s thunder roar,  
The king foresaw the wooers bathed in gore.

Now in Ulysses’ hall the females came,  
And in the hearth relumed the festive flame,

Fresh from his couch the prince impatient sprung,  
And his bright raiment round his body flung,  
His radiant sword athwart his shoulders braced,  
On his fair feet his beauteous sandals laced,  
Grasp'd his brass-pointed spear, and onward press'd,  
And on the threshold thus his nurse address'd :

‘ Cheer'd you our guest with banquet and with bed,  
‘ Or couch'd he, disregarded, and unfed ?  
‘ For oft my mother, tho' full wise, respects  
‘ One less deserving, and the best rejects.’

‘ Not now, my son,’ replied the cautious dame,  
‘ Reproach thy mother, and the blameless blame.  
‘ He quaff'd at will the wine, and, well regaled,  
‘ Ne'er, at the queen's request, the viands fail'd—  
‘ And when at length he seem'd to sleep inclined,  
‘ The queen her maids to strow his couch enjoin'd :  
‘ Yet he, as one to ceaseless grief a prey,  
‘ On the soft bed refused his limbs to lay,  
‘ But in the outer court on hides undress'd  
‘ Couch'd, while we spread a mantle o'er his rest.’

The prince then issuing forth firm grasp'd his spear,  
And his fleet dogs still follow'd his career.

Onward he pass'd, till in the gathering throng  
Graceful he stood the forum's press among :  
While Euryclea to the female band  
Famed Opis' daughter utter'd her command :

‘ Haste, haste ye, sweep, and sprinkle ye the floor,  
‘ And cast the purple rugs the benches o’er :  
‘ Ye, sponge the tables, ye, the beakers lave,  
‘ And rince the goblets in the crystal wave,  
‘ Ye, to the fountain haste, and quickly bring  
‘ The freshest water from the living spring :  
‘ Soon will they hasten to the banquet hall,  
‘ And hail at dawn the public festival.’

She spake—they heard her voice, and all obey’d :  
And twenty hasten’d where the fountain play’d,  
And the whole household labour’d.—Then each guest  
Entering the palace to the banquet press’d.  
And some now swiftly split the cloven wood,  
While the maids hasten’d from the living flood,  
The while Eumæus led to feast the board  
Three fatted swine the fattest of his hoard,  
Then left them in the court to graze their food,  
And to Ulysses spake in friendliest mood :

‘ Say, do the Grecians now regard thee more,  
‘ Or ’neath their roof condemn thee as before ?’

‘ O that the gods, Eumæus,’ he replied,  
‘ Would by just vengeance crush their scornful pride,  
‘ They, whose vile deeds another’s dome defame,  
‘ Nor feel the slightest sense of awe and shame !’

As thus they spake, Melanthius near them drew,  
And led his choicest goats to feast the crew :  
Beneath the porch, two swains the victims bound,  
While thus Melanthius rail’d with taunting sound :

‘ What !—thou still present with thy beggary brawl,  
‘ Troubling the guests—hence—quit the banquet hall—  
‘ We part not, else, I deem, without a blow,  
‘ Hence, wretch, to other feasts bawl out thy woe.’

The king, tho’ wrathful, deign’d not yield reply,  
But shook his brow in sternest dignity.  
The third, Philæti<sup>us</sup> to the wooers sped,  
And his choice goats, and sterile heifer led :  
The seamen in their bark had these convey’d,  
Still wont to ferry all who sought their aid.  
His goats and heifer ’neath the porch at rest ;  
Philæti<sup>us</sup> self the swineherd thus address’d :

‘ Say, who this stranger, he, who lately came,  
‘ His native land, his boasted race, proclaim—  
‘ Unhappy man! his form and awful air  
‘ A birth scarce less than majesty declare.’

He spake, and in his hand the monarch’s press’d,  
And ‘ Father, hail,’ he said, ‘ hail, reverend guest!  
‘ O be supremely bless’d thy future hour,  
‘ As now thou bow’st beneath fate’s adverse power.  
‘ Relentless Jove! who pitiest not our race  
‘ Prey of unsolaced grief, and dire disgrace—  
‘ I shudder’d as I view’d, tears fill’d mine eyes,—  
‘ Methinks, Ulysses mask’d in such disguise,  
‘ Thus, in vile rags far off is doom’d to stray,  
‘ If yet he breathe, and view the light of day:  
‘ But if in Hades realm, already dead,  
‘ Alas for him, that high, that honour’d head,  
‘ Who me, while yet a stripling, me preferr’d  
‘ In Cephalonia’s isle to guard his herd,  
‘ Now numberless; none elsewhere, none on earth,  
‘ Can boast of such brave steers so vast a birth.  
‘ But these, at their command, perforce, I bring,  
‘ Who riot in thy palace, injured king!  
‘ And scorn thy son, and heaven’s just rage deride,  
‘ And proudly at their will his wealth divide.



‘ And oft my soul resolves, tho’ harsh the deed  
‘ While thy son lives, to other lands to lead  
‘ His countless herds—yet, harsher to remain,  
‘ And fatten with his spoils their haughty train.  
‘ Yes—I long since another king had sought,  
‘ For their misdeeds transgress all bounds of thought,  
‘ But that my king shall come buoys up my mind,  
‘ And scatter these like dust before the wind.’

‘ Herdsman,’ the king replied, ‘ since thee I deem  
‘ No senseless man, nor one of light esteem,  
‘ But know by proof how prudence guides thy mind,  
‘ Hence, mark the word, which now my oath shall bind,  
‘ Jove! God of gods! thou social board, attest!  
‘ And thou, Ulysses’ hearth, whereon I rest!  
‘ While thou art present here, it shall not fail,  
‘ Ulysses shall again his palace hail,  
‘ And thou thyself, if such thy will, discern  
‘ These lordlings bathed in blood at his return.’

‘ If,’ he replied, ‘ Jove speed that blissful hour,  
‘ Thou too shalt know this arm’s protecting power.’

Thus too Eumæus pray’d to every god  
To guide Ulysses to his own abode.

While thus they pray'd, the suitors undisguised,  
Death, the dire murder of the prince, devised :  
When suddenly swift sailing o'er their head,  
An eagle high in air his wings outspread ;  
Along their left the bird was seen to move,  
And in his talons grasp'd a trembling dove.

‘ Cease, friends !’ Amphinomus cried, ‘ of death no  
more :  
‘ Feast, let the banquet our lost joy restore.’

That counsel pleased—on revelry intent,  
On to the palace hall the feasters went,  
O'er the proud thrones and seats their mantles threw,  
And the large sheep, and pastured bullock slew,  
Fat goats and swine : and these the entrails shared,  
Those in bright bowls the temper'd wine prepared.  
Eumæus served the cups, Philæti<sup>us</sup> spread  
From beauteous canisters the board with bread,  
Melanthius pour'd the wine : and thus regaled,  
The impatient guests the tempting feast assail'd.  
The prince, deep brooding his dark projects o'er,  
Nigh the stone threshold of the palace door,  
Within the royal dome Ulysses placed,  
By a mean seat, and slender board disgraced ;

Yet doled him out his share, the gold cup crown'd,  
And cheer'd him thus with animating sound :

‘ Sit thou amid the guests and drink at will,  
‘ While I their taunts, and daring outrage still ;  
‘ Not free to all, this is Ulysses’ dome,  
‘ And I the heir of his ancestral home.  
‘ And you, ye wooers ! from all wrong abstain,  
‘ Lest strife, and deeds of blood the banquet stain.’

Awe struck they bit their lips, none, long time, spoke,  
Till thus Eupitheus’ son the silence broke :

‘ Tho’ harsh his proud dictation, bear it, friends,  
‘ Tho’ fierce the threat that o’er us now impends.  
‘ ’Tis Jove protects him, or his silenced tongue  
‘ Erewhile had ceased, nor here had shrilly rung.’

The prince his word despised. Now onward sped,  
The heralds thro’ the city duly led  
The hallow’d hecatombs, where ’neath the shade  
Of Phœbus’ grove their vows the Achæans paid :  
They roasted now the flesh, and now withdrew,  
And rightly portioning, gave each his due,  
And to Ulysses his allotted share,  
An equal portion of the public fare,

The prince thus order'd. But, while yet at feast,  
By Pallas' will nor jeer nor outrage ceased :  
She will'd that added insult should impart  
Fresh rage for vengeance to Ulysses' heart.  
Amid the wooers, one, whose life was shame,  
Of Samian birth, known by Ctesippus' name,  
Who, trusting in the wealth his sire had stored,  
Dared woo the widow of the absent lord,  
Thus to the suitors spake :

‘ Yon guest has shared  
‘ His portion of the feast for all prepared :  
‘ It is not right, nor just, when others feed,  
‘ That one, the prince's guest, alone should need ;  
‘ I too my hospitable gift will give,  
‘ That from his hand some bather may receive,  
‘ Or some who in Ulysses' household serve  
‘ May take from him what richly they deserve.’

Then from a basket, from that rich repast,  
Snatch'd an ox-foot, and with fell fury cast  
Against the king : Ulysses, as it flew  
Gently declining, from the stroke withdrew  
With grim sardonic smile—against the wall  
The burden of the blow was heard to fall.

At the foul deed, indignant and ashamed,  
The prince, the wretch upbraiding, thus exclaim'd :

‘ Far better now for thee, that thou hast fail’d :  
‘ Far better, that his providence prevail’d :  
‘ Else had this spear transpierced thee, and thy sire  
‘ Had changed thy nuptials to the funeral pyre.  
‘ No more shall wrong and outrage shame this roof :  
‘ I know, and well can judge by fatal proof,  
‘ Both good and ill : you here behold no child :  
‘ Yet this I see and suffer, thus despoil’d,  
‘ My cattle slaughter’d, and my cellar drain’d :  
‘ For how can battle be by one sustain’d  
‘ ’Gainst such an host ?—But cease, and sin no more :  
‘ Or if you lust to slay me, spill my gore ;  
‘ Death is my choice—’twere best at once to die,  
‘ Than day by day submit to injury,  
‘ View my guest stricken, and my hearth disgraced,  
‘ And those that serve me by your lust debased.’

With awful wonder struck, all silence held,  
Till Agelaüs thus their fear dispell’d :

‘ Let none ’gainst words thus just, unwisely rage,  
‘ Nor sharply answering in fresh strife engage.



‘ Strike not the stranger, wrong not, nor offend  
‘ Those on Ulysses’ service who attend :  
‘ Yet—I would fain both son and mother warn,  
‘ If not my warning both too proudly scorn.  
‘ When you might yet a lingering hope retain  
‘ That lost Ulysses would return again,  
‘ Then ’twas no crime the nuptials to delay,  
‘ Cheer’d by the hope of that auspicious day.  
‘ But since that chief no more his hearth shall hail,  
‘ Let thy persuasion, prince, at last prevail :  
‘ Bid her, no longer loth, that suitor wed  
‘ Who best deserves, and mostly dowers her bed,  
‘ So shalt thou master of thy wealth remain,  
‘ And the new bride another palace gain.’

‘ Not by high Jove, not by my father’s woe,  
‘ Who far off dies, or wanders to and fro,’  
Telemachus replied, ‘ I nor delay,  
‘ Far less forbid my mother’s nuptial day,  
‘ But counsel her to fix the bridal hour,  
‘ Wed whom she will, or who may mostly dower ;  
‘ But from this palace her unwilling send  
‘ By word unkind—such deed high Jove forefend !’

Then Pallas madden’d that unhallow’d train.  
The unconscious laugh betray’d the frenzied brain,

The exhaustless laughter while they gorged their food,  
A festival of flesh immix'd with blood :  
Tears fill'd their eyes, their thought prefigured death,  
When thus the prophet spoke with prescient breath :

‘ Ah! wretches! what your doom! you fade from  
sight,  
‘ Your face, your form, your feet, all wrapp'd in night :  
‘ Your outcry rages, tear-drops scald your cheeks,  
‘ Blood each proud wall, and stately column streaks,  
‘ The vestibule, the court, with shadows swell,  
‘ Hurrying in darkness to the house of hell,  
‘ The sun is quench'd in heaven, and dire and deep  
‘ O'er all, strange midnight horrors thickly sweep.’

All heard, and lightly laugh'd to scorn the seer,  
When thus Eurymachus dispell'd their fear :

‘ The man is mad, so lately here our guest :  
‘ Youths! to the forum, hence bear off this pest,  
‘ Since all seems night to him.’

The seer replied,

‘ Eurymachus, I want no aid, no guide,  
‘ These eyes, ears, feet suffice, and in my breast,  
‘ A spirit prompt and fit to rule the rest :

‘ These bear me onward from the rushing woe  
‘ That none shall ’scape, no wooer shun the blow,  
‘ None who within Ulysses’ palace dare  
‘ Outrage the guest, and deeds of blood prepare.’

Then left the royal dome, and revel train,  
And sought Piræus’ friendly roof again.  
Meanwhile the suitors on each other gazed,  
And ’gainst the prince contemptuous laughter raised,  
Jeering his guests.

‘ Kind host,’ thus proudly spake  
A haughty youth, ‘ the guests that here partake  
‘ Your proffer’d bounty, are disgrace to all ;  
‘ This common beggar with importunate brawl  
‘ For meat and drink, an idler nothing worth,  
‘ Skill’d in no useful work, a load on earth :  
‘ And one, a madman, who from table rose  
‘ At once a seer our ruin to disclose.  
‘ But take my sound advice,—so reap some gain,  
‘ To Sicily transport them o’er the main  
‘ And barter them for gold.’

All join’d the jest :  
But the brave prince his rising wrath repress’d,

In silence eyed his sire, and watch'd the time,  
In their heart's blood to expiate their crime.  
Now nigh the banquet, on her stately throne  
Where sat the queen, to her each word was known,  
While laughing loud 'mid many a slaughter'd beast,  
The revellers enjoy'd their morning feast,  
So sweet, so grateful : but their eve's repast,  
Shall prove most bitter—It shall be their last—  
Such vengeance Pallas, and the hero wrought  
On those whose guilt dire retribution brought.





THE TWENTY-FIRST BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Penelope brings the bow to the suitors : they fail to bend it. Ulysses bends it with ease, and passes the arrow through the twelve rings.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XXI.

THE blue-eyed Goddess, with determined mind,  
Icarius' daughter to her will inclined,  
To prove the suitors by Ulysses' bow,  
Their trial, and the prelude of their woe.  
When to her inmost chamber's high ascent  
With her attendant train their sov'reign went,  
The beauteous queen a key resplendent bore,  
Whose ivory handle graced its brazen ore,  
Then sought that chamber, where, withdrawn from day  
Brass, gold, and steel, Ulysses' treasures lay :  
The quiver there, and there the elastic bow,  
And arrows, that ere-long with blood shall flow :  
Gifts which of yore from Lacedæmon's coast  
He bore from Iphitus his god-like host.  
They in Messenia chanced of yore to meet,  
And in Orsilochus's palace greet.

There, with high mission charged, Ulysses came,  
An honour'd youth, a public debt to claim,  
For pirates from his isle, and o'er the deep  
Had with their shepherds borne three hundred sheep.  
Hence, yet a youth, he on that voyage sent,  
Commission'd by his sire, and senate, went.  
But Iphitus there sought twelve mares that stray'd,  
While under each a nurtured mule-foal play'd:  
Those mares which caused his death, when wandering on  
He came to Hercules, Jove's far-famed son,  
Who slew him 'neath his roof, and dared despise  
The immortal gods, and vengeance of the skies,  
Nor aught revered the table where he led  
The invited guest, and slew the man he fed.  
The murderer kept the mares. While thus intent  
In search of his lost steeds the hero went,  
He met, and gave to famed Laertes' heir  
The ponderous bow his father wont to bear,  
Great Eurytus, who passing to the grave  
That glorious treasure to his offspring gave—  
To him Ulysses gave a sword and spear,  
Exchange and pledge of social love sincere:  
But ne'er as guest with guest they greeted more;  
Ere then, the Herculean hand had shed his gore.  
But ne'er Ulysses when he cross'd the main  
Bore that pledged treasure to the battle plain,

But left to witness friendship's plighted hand,  
And grace him honour'd in his native land—

Now to that chamber when the sov'reign came  
She cross'd the polish'd threshold's oaken frame,  
Skilfully smooth'd, and by the level placed,  
Strengthen'd by posts, with radiant portals graced,  
Then loosed the cord that all securely held,  
Thrust in the key, and back the bolts repell'd  
With force opposed : loud crack'd each opening door,  
Loud as the pastured bull's far-echoing roar :  
Struck by the key that back the bolts withdrew,  
Thus crack'd the doors and wide expanded flew.  
Now to the lofty floor she bent her way  
Where in their chests her fragrant raiments lay,  
Then from the nail her outstretch'd arm withdrew  
The bow and radiant case that hid its view :  
And seated there, she placed it on her knee,  
And drawing forth the bow wept bitterly.  
Then, with long weeping tired, she pass'd along  
The festive hall the rival chiefs among,  
And in her hand the bow elastic bore,  
And quiver fill'd with shafts that groan'd for gore.  
Her maidens took a chest whose depth contain'd  
Rich prizes by her glorious consort gain'd,



Much steel and brass. And now the beauteous queen  
Stood at the door the stately posts between,  
O'er her she pass'd a veil her charms to hide,  
While a chaste damsel stood at either side.

‘ Hear me,’ she spake, ye, who this palace throng,  
‘ And lead your days in ceaseless feasts along  
‘ In the king’s absence—Ye, whose sole pretence,  
‘ While here you loiter gorged at our expence,  
‘ To wed this hand ; come forth, the test I bring,  
‘ The mighty bow of that renowned king.  
‘ He who Ulysses’ bow can easiest bend,  
‘ And thro’ the twelve ring’d bars the arrow send,  
‘ Him will I follow, and this palace leave  
‘ That bless’d my youth, and to whose hearth I cleave,  
‘ Ulysses’ hearth, loved seat of pure delight,  
‘ That still in dreams shall fascinate my sight.’

Then bade Eumæus place the bow she bore,  
And the ring’d bars of steel the chiefs before :  
Eumæus, weeping, took them, and obey’d,  
Nor less the tear-drops down Philœtius stray’d  
At sight of that known bow. Antinoüs view’d,  
And mock’d their tears with bitter insult rude :

‘ Ye senseless boors, who care but for the day,  
‘ Why, wretches, yield to tears unbridled sway ?  
‘ Why pierce his consort’s heart, she, whose lament  
‘ Has ne’er known solace since Ulysses went ?  
‘ Methinks, while here we daringly contend,  
‘ This stubborn weapon will not lightly bend,  
‘ For ’mid these many chiefs, not one is found  
‘ Such as Ulysses, far o’er all renown’d :  
‘ I saw him once, and still recall the time,  
‘ Tho’ I, an infant in life’s earliest prime.’

He spake, and hope presumptuous swell’d his breast  
To bend the bow, and stand the arrowy test.  
Fool! thou shalt first Ulysses’ vengeance feel,  
And taste the sharpness of his arrowy steel,  
Thou, ’neath his roof who scorn’dst him in thy pride,  
And badest the rest, like thee, their king deride !

‘ Alas! me too,’ Ulysses’ offspring said,  
‘ Me too, Saturnian Jove has senseless made.  
‘ My prudent mother has declared her mind  
‘ To seek another mansion, this resign’d,  
‘ And I rejoice unseemly—yet, arise,  
‘ Come forth ye wooers, lo ! the matchless prize :

‘ Not such a woman all Achaia’s earth,  
‘ Pylos, nor Argos, nor Mycene’s birth,  
‘ No, nor yet Ithaca’s well peopled plains,  
‘ Nor dark Epirus’ distant realm contains :  
‘ ’Tis known to all, it needs no son to raise  
‘ Such, such a mother’s far re-echo’d praise.  
‘ No more by vain pretexts delay the hour :  
‘ Now, gallants, bend the bow, now prove your power.  
‘ I too will strive, and if the bow I bend,  
‘ And thro’ the rings the unerring arrow send,  
‘ Not then unsolaced will my spirit grieve,  
‘ When my loved mother shall this palace leave :  
‘ One yet is left Ulysses to replace,  
‘ The games that graced the sire, the son shall grace.’

Then stood erect, and swiftly cast aside  
His purple robe, and falchion’s glittering pride :  
First fix’d the bars, and delved one lengthen’d dyke  
That all enclosed, and levell’d all alike,  
Then round them heap’d the earth—With awe struck  
mien

All gazed upon a sight till then unseen,  
His graceful skill. And now in manly pride  
He on the threshold stood, and boldly tried  
To string the bow : thrice strain’d his strength, and fail’d,  
Yet still proud hope to thread the rings prevail’d.

And now, the fourth time, he had bent the bow  
But the sire's signal bade the youth forego  
The bold attempt.

Then thus the prince exclaim'd :

‘ Ah ! I henceforth shall live a wretch defamed,  
‘ Or weak in youth, this unavailing hand  
‘ Dares not the offender's insolence withstand—  
‘ But ye, who boast your strength o’ermastering mine,  
‘ Come, grasp the bow, no more the test decline.’

Then on the ground laid down the bow unbent,  
Which on the polish'd wainscot softly leant ;  
And where the horn the bow's smooth point enclosed  
The unused arrow peaceably reposed,  
And on his throne reclined. And now the son  
Of famed Eupitheus thus his speech begun :

‘ Each, in due order, as we now recline,  
‘ Rise from the right hand, whence we pour the wine.’

That counsel pleased : Leiodes first arose,  
Skill'd from slain beasts the future to expose.  
He nigh the beaker held his inmost seat,  
He who alone ne'er deign'd their taunts repeat.

The bow he took, and arrow's shadowy length,  
And on the threshold stood, and strain'd his strength :  
In vain : o'erpower'd, his soft and unworn hand  
Dropp'd down, while thus he spake amid the band :

‘ Come ye : my force avails not : grasp the bow  
‘ That many a chief in dust shall level low.  
‘ Yet—better far to die, than live deprived  
‘ Of that sole aim for which alone we lived,  
‘ Vainly expectant. Hope now fires your brain  
‘ The great Ulysses’ consort to obtain :  
‘ But try the proof, then, lesson’d by despair,  
‘ Gain by your spousal gifts some other fair,  
‘ And leave the queen at will to choose her mate,  
‘ Who proffers most, and most approved by fate.’

He spake, then downward placed the bow unbent,  
Which on the polish'd wainscot softly leant,  
And where the horn the bow's smooth tip enclosed,  
With trembling hand the idle shaft reposed ;  
Then on the throne, whence late he rose, reclined,  
While thus Antinoüs spake his haughty mind :

‘ Leiodes, whence this rash, intemperate word  
‘ That from thy lip indignantly I heard ?



‘ Why should this bow deprive of life the rest,  
‘ Because thou fail’st, unequal to the test ?  
‘ Not thee thy mother gave to view the light  
‘ To bend the bow, and wing the arrowy flight :  
‘ We best, illustrious chiefs, that trial claim.’

Then to Melanthius spake,—‘ Haste, light the flame,  
‘ And nigh the hearth, before the gathering heat,  
‘ Place, with a fleece array’d, an ample seat,  
‘ Then from the store-house bring a suet cake,  
‘ That we, slow melting it, an unguent make,  
‘ And suppling, as it melts, the anointed bow,  
‘ Quickly, by trial-proof, the conqueror know.’

Melanthius lit the fire, and near the heat  
Placed, with a fleece array’d, an ample seat,  
And brought the suet : then with this imbued,  
The bow they suppld, and the proof renew’d :  
Yet none could bend the bow, their efforts, vain :  
Too feeble, all, that trial to sustain.  
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus alone  
Abstain’d, tho’ far their force the rest outshone.

Then, from the house, at once, with like intent  
That time, Eumæus and Philœtius went :

Ulysses view'd, and following close behind,  
Beyond the outward court their footsteps join'd,  
And kindly thus address'd :

‘ Say, friends, reveal,  
‘ Shall I my thoughts disclose, or still conceal ?  
‘ Yet—my heart bids me speak. If here some god  
‘ Should bring your lord : if now before you trod  
‘ Ulysses—what the purport of your mind,  
‘ Him to defend, or to yon chiefs inclined ?  
‘ Speak your resolve.’

Philœtius swift replied,  
‘ O hear me, Jove!—if thus thy will decide,  
‘ That here Ulysses should once more return,  
‘ Thou, what this arm avails, shouldst quickly learn.’

He too, Eumæus, pray'd to every god  
Once more to greet him in his loved abode.  
And when Ulysses had explored their breast,  
Thus his confiding word his friends address'd :

‘ Lo ! I am he, who worn by woe and toil,  
‘ Reach, in the twentieth year, my native soil.  
‘ Friends of my heart ! to me ’tis fully known  
‘ I come, by you desired, and you alone.

‘ Of all my train—from none, save you, I learn  
‘ No prayer has ever breathed for my return.  
‘ Hear now the truth, and what I speak retain,  
‘ If the gods grant by me the suitors slain,  
‘ I will to each a wife, wealth, mansion give,  
‘ Where you shall nigh Ulysses’ palace live.  
‘ There all your days shall pass in peaceful mood,  
‘ Friends of my son, like brothers of one blood;  
‘ But—that your trust may firm on me rely,  
‘ Lo! I lay bare to your discerning eye  
‘ The scar, yet witnessing the tusked boar  
‘ That gash’d me when Parnassus drunk my gore.’

He spake, and back the tatter’d raiment threw,  
And as the well-known scar came forth to view,  
They wept, and strain’d him in their close embrace,  
And kiss’d his shoulders and majestic face.  
He too, their master, kiss’d their hands and head,  
And eve had closed upon the tears they shed,  
Had not Ulysses their lament repress’d,  
And, mastering his feeling, thus address’d :

‘ Cease your lament, lest those who pass, perceive,  
‘ And tell the feasters how you strangely grieve :  
‘ But enter one by one : I foremost lead,  
‘ Ye follow, and my sign intently heed.

‘ Ne’er will the suitors yield, I well foreknow,  
‘ Ne’er trust to me the arrow and the bow :  
‘ But, thou Eumæus, passing ’mid the band,  
‘ Restore the weapon to Ulysses’ hand :  
‘ And strictly charge the women o’er and o’er  
‘ To close and bar each well-compacted door,  
‘ And if perchance, if unawares their ear  
‘ Of those within the groan and outcry hear  
‘ Let none go forth, but peaceable and still  
‘ The labour of her household work fulfil.  
‘ And thou, my brave Philœtius, guard the hall,  
‘ Close lock, and with a chain firm-fasten all.’

Then, inly entering, on his seat reclined,  
And his friends follow’d, as their lord enjoin’d.  
Eurymachus the bow incessant plied,  
Chafed nigh the flame, and turn’d from side to side,  
Yet fail’d to bend it, while his heaving breast  
Thus, groaning bitterly, his rage express’d,

‘ Ah ! for myself, for all I sorely grieve,  
‘ Yet—not so much Ulysses’ wife to leave,  
‘ For in this isle, and those that circle round,  
‘ Full many a tempting fair may yet be found,  
‘ But more I grieve, that in this numerous band  
‘ All powerless shrink beneath Ulysses’ hand,

‘ All fail to bend his bow :—race after race  
‘ Shall load our memory with deserved disgrace.’

‘ Eurymachus !’ Eupithes’ son replied,  
‘ That ne’er shall be, thou shalt thyself decide.  
‘ This day the nation holds a solemn feast  
‘ To their great god, be now the trial ceased.  
‘ Lay down the bow, let all here still remain,  
‘ And let the trench the upright bars retain :  
‘ For none, I deem, how rash soe’er and rude,  
‘ Will to remove Ulysses’ marks intrude.  
‘ Call the cup-bearer ; let the bowl o’erflow,  
‘ Pour to the god the wine, lay down the bow :  
‘ And bid Melanthius at the rising morn  
‘ Bring the choice goats that best his flock adorn,  
‘ That to the Archer God the thighs may flame,  
‘ And we resume the bow, and end the game.’

All heard well-pleased—then with the crystal wave  
The heralds duly came their hands to lave,  
And youths from right to left the goblet bore.  
Their thirst now satiate, and libation o’er,  
Thus, meditating fraud, Ulysses spake :

‘ Deign, suitors ! ye, who here your revel make



- ‘ And woo the illustrious queen, with patient ear,  
‘ What my heart longs to utter, deign to hear.  
‘ Thou, chief, Eurymachus, and thou, whose voice  
‘ The counsel gave, that met the public choice.  
‘ Now leave the bow, to heaven your hopes resign :  
‘ The gods, at dawn, to whom their wills incline,  
‘ Will strength impart—but—let me try the bow,  
‘ Let me by trial what my prowess know,  
‘ If yet that strength endure, once justly famed,  
‘ Ere by sore famine and far wandering tamed.’

Rage seized on all, deep rage and dire dismay  
Lest he should bend the bow, and bear away  
From all the prize.—And, thus, by passion moved  
Antinoüs’ stern rebuke the king reproved :

- ‘ Wretch ! hast thou lost all sense ? shame wholly  
    ceased ?  
‘ Wretch ! ill-content, thus honour’d, thus to feast  
‘ With these high chiefs ! thy portion ne’er deferr’d,  
‘ Where thou hast heard—ne’er yet by beggar heard—  
‘ Our high discourse. No doubt, the tempting bowl  
‘ Fill’d without stint, and drain’d without controul,  
‘ Confusing others, has thy sense confused—  
‘ The centaur thus by drunkenness abused,

‘ Eurytion, famed Pirithous’ welcomed guest,  
‘ As the swill’d wine-draught madden’d in his breast,  
‘ Dire ills devised.—The heroes onward flew,  
‘ And thro’ the vestibule the madman drew,  
‘ His ears and nostrils lopp’d.—By wine betray’d,  
‘ He bore his punishment where’er he stray’d.  
‘ With man and centaur hence perpetual strife,  
‘ And all the woes that rack’d his future life,  
‘ All bred of drunkenness. Not less thy woe,  
‘ If thou presume, vile wretch, to touch the bow.  
‘ Thou, in this land shalt meet no friend to save,  
‘ But we will send thee, fetter’d o’er the wave,  
‘ To Echetus the horror of mankind,  
‘ And there thy due reward, vile drunkard! find.  
‘ Therefore in silence feast, nor henceforth dare,  
‘ Such as thou art, with younger-born compare.’

‘ Antinoüs,’ thus spake the prudent queen,  
‘ ’Tis not decorous, ’tis not just, I ween,  
‘ Thus to rebuke a guest beneath this dome  
‘ Who in the prince’s welcome finds a home.  
‘ If, trusting to his strength, he dare contend,  
‘ And the great bow of famed Ulysses bend,  
‘ Deem’st thou his hand shall hence my foot-step guide,  
‘ And lead me to his home a willing bride ?

‘ He hopes it not himself—that ne’er shall be—  
‘ Feast on, nor harbour thoughts dishonouring me.’

‘ We never deem’d—such notion were offence—  
‘ That his base hand, great queen, should lead thee  
hence,’

Eurymachus replied, ‘ we fear’d the scorn  
‘ Of man and woman, if one meaner born,  
‘ Should bruit it forth, that we a worthless band,  
‘ Inferior to thy lord, dared woo thy hand,  
‘ Yet fail’d to bend his bow ; when hither came  
‘ A wandering beggar, one without a name,  
‘ And bent the bow, and threaded every ring.—  
‘ To us, such bruit would shame eternal bring.’

‘ Eurymachus,’ the queen replied again,  
‘ Hope ye a nation’s favour to obtain,  
‘ Ye, who a mighty hero’s wealth devour ?  
‘ Shall not such deeds your souls with shame o’erpower ?  
‘ This guest—behold his stature, well knit frame,  
‘ And he too boasts a sire of honour’d name—  
‘ Give him the bow : let him that test sustain :  
‘ And mark my word, a word not breathed in vain ;  
‘ If he succeed, if him Apollo aid,  
‘ He in my glorious gifts shall stand array’d,

‘ Rich robe and tunic : and his arm shall wield  
‘ A spear from dogs and men his way to shield,  
‘ My sword shall guard, my sandals grace his feet,  
‘ And my bark waft him to his wish’d-for seat.’

‘ My mother,’ thus Telemachus replied,  
‘ I, at my pleasure, will in this decide :  
‘ None, than myself, more powerful, if I choose  
‘ The bow to proffer, or at once refuse :  
‘ None, who in Ithaca hold sceptred sway,  
‘ Or whom nigh Elis all the isles obey :  
‘ None shall my will, if such my will, withstand,  
‘ To give this bow for ever to his hand.  
‘ Hence to thy chamber, there thy charge sustain,  
‘ Weave the fine web, and task thy female train.  
‘ The bow is man’s high charge, and chiefly mine ;  
‘ I, who to none the sovereignty resign.’

She, awe-struck, heard, and in her mind revolved  
What her determined offspring had resolved :  
Then to her chamber with her damsels went,  
And wept her lord, till worn with long lament,  
At Pallas’ will, soft languor o’er her stole,  
Closed her swoln lids, and soothed in sleep her soul.

Eumæus brought the bow, and loud and long  
The outcry burst the indignant guests among,  
And thus a voice exclaim'd :

‘ Why, wretch distraught,  
‘ Why hast thou, and for whom, that weapon brought ?  
‘ The dogs, whom thou hast fed, amid thy swine  
‘ Shall gorge thee, if kind heaven to us incline.’

Scared at their outcry, and tumultuous roar,  
The hind replaced the bow upon the floor.

‘ Here, onward bring the bow,’ the prince exclaim’d,  
‘ Thou canst not all alike obey, unblamed.  
‘ Haste, lest enraged I drive thee to the field :  
‘ Young as I am, thy strength to mine must yield.  
‘ O that—o’er all who here unbidden feed,  
‘ Such were my strength as might their force exceed,  
‘ Then, from my palace would I drive perforce  
‘ Those who here brood on ill, nor cease their baleful  
course !’

The suitors at his threat, with senseless pride,  
Smiled on the prince and cast their rage aside.



The while Eumæus, true to his command  
Placed his own weapon in Ulysses' hand,  
Then call'd forth Euryclea :

‘ Prudent friend,  
‘ ’Tis the prince bids me, his behest attend :  
‘ Haste, close the chamber’s strong-compacted door,  
‘ And strictly charge the women o’er and o’er,  
‘ Charge, if perchance, if unawares their ear  
‘ Of those within or groan or outcry hear,  
‘ That none go forth, but peaceable and still  
‘ The labours of the household work fulfil.’

Then Euryclea closed the chamber door,  
And strictly charged the women o’er and o’er.  
And silently Philœtius outward pass’d,  
And made the hall’s strict-guarded portals fast :  
Beneath the porch a bark’s strong cordage found,  
And with its added strength the portal bound ;  
Then entering, downward sat, and keenly eyed  
His lord, who ceaseless touch’d, and turn’d, and tried  
The bow all o’er, lest of corruption born  
The engender’d worms had inly pierced the horn.

‘ Skill’d is he, used to bows,’ a suitor said,  
‘ Such arms are haply in his dwelling laid,

‘ Or such he fain would frame : thus to and fro,  
‘ Expert in ill that vagrant turns the bow.’

Another cried : ‘ Such joy on him attend  
‘ As strength now fails his arm the bow to bend.’

Thus they : the while the king on vengeance bent  
Poised the great bow, presageful of the event.  
As when a tuneful bard with easy skill  
On the new lyre draws out the chords at will,  
The sheep’s wreath’d entrails, thus the mighty bow,  
Beneath Ulysses’ tension, smooth and slow  
Bent without toil, and at his touch, the string  
Clear twang’d, and like a swallow seem’d to sing.  
Awe seized the suitors, all their colour fled,  
And Jove portentous thunder’d o’er their head.  
The king exulting at the auspicious sign,  
Hail’d in that omen Jove’s high will divine :  
Then from the table seized the outdrawn dart  
That lay before him, from the rest apart  
That closed within the quiver yet remain’d,  
Not long to slumber there with blood unstain’d :  
This on the centre of the bow he laid,  
And on his seat in stern composure staid,  
When with fix’d aim that swerved not from his view  
He with the cord the arrow’s notch home drew,

And loosed the steel-barb'd shaft, that onward pass'd  
Thro' all, ring after ring, from first to last :  
Then to his son exclaim'd :

‘ Thy guest, at least  
‘ Has not disgraced thee at this princely feast.  
‘ I fail'd not of my aim : nor long I strain'd  
‘ Ere bent the bow : this arm its strength retain'd :  
‘ Not, as they deem'd, these suitors saw my shame.  
‘ But now, by day, these guests the banquet claim,  
‘ And afterwards, no doubt, the song and lyre,  
‘ Grace of the feast, shall satiate their desire.’

Then gave the sign. The prince around him slung  
The two edged sword that from his shoulders swung,  
Grasp'd with strong arm the spear, and nigh his sire  
Rose an arm'd man, radiant in war attire.



THE TWENTY-SECOND BOOK

OF

THE ODYSSEY.



#### ARGUMENT.

Ulysses, by the aid of Minerva, slays the suitors.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XXII.

ULYSSES down his ragged vesture flung,  
And on the high-raised threshold boldly sprung,  
And held aloft his bow, and quiver'd store,  
And the fleet arrows pour'd his feet before :  
Then loud exclaim'd :

‘ This arduous prize is gain'd,  
‘ Another waits that none has yet obtain'd ;  
‘ Soon shall I see if this shall crown my fame,  
‘ And Phœbus guide his votary's rightful aim.’

Then 'gainst Antinous the keen shaft impell'd,  
While the gay reveller a goblet held,  
Bright, golden, double ear'd, and now intent  
To drain the nectar, o'er its border bent,

Nor thought, fond man ! on death—For who, what guest  
E'er dreamt, that one, alone amid the rest,  
One, tho' for strength renown'd, would rashly brave,  
Plan the death-blow, and hurl him to the grave ?  
Aim'd at his throat, the dart Ulysses sent  
On thro' his tender neck directly went.  
He droop'd aside—on earth the goblet rung,  
While thro' the channel of his nostrils sprung  
The blood's dark gush, and as his spirit pass'd,  
His quivering foot the table backward cast,  
And from the o'erflowing of the feast, the floor  
With wine and food stream'd mingled with his gore.  
Up sprung the guests : wild uproar fill'd the hall :  
Each eye with restless glance swept round the wall,  
No shield, no sword there shone, while every tongue  
Thus its deep curses on Ulysses flung :

‘ Ill hast thou aim'd at men : no future test  
‘ Awaits thee more, but ruin manifest.  
‘ The glory of this isle thy hand has slain,  
‘ Hence the gorged vultures shall thy life-blood drain.’

Thuseach exclaim'd—They deem'd, dullfools ! his blow  
Had laid unwittingly that chieftain low,  
Nor thought that now o'er all death darkly hung,  
When the king, sternly lowering, loosed his tongue :

‘ Vile dogs, ye deem’d not that I e’er again  
‘ Should home return from Ilion’s hostile plain,  
‘ Hence ye devour’d my house, hence dared disgrace  
‘ And force my females to your vile embrace :  
‘ Hence dared, me living, woo my wife, nor fear’d  
‘ The vengeance of mankind, or heaven revered ;  
‘ Now death o’ershadows all.’

All, blanch’d by dread,  
Look’d round, to fly the weapon ere it sped.  
Eurymachus sole spake :

‘ If in thy home  
‘ Ulysses, Ithacensian, thou art come,  
‘ Just thy reproach : the Achæans ill have wrought,  
‘ And ruin to thy lands and palace brought :  
‘ Yet he who urged the rest, now breathless lies,  
‘ Antinoüs, let his death, ’tis just, suffice :  
‘ He less solicitous to gain the bride,  
‘ Than buoy’d by hopes, whose issue Jove denied,  
‘ O’er Ithaca to hold his sceptred reign,  
‘ And o’er thy son exult in ambush slain—  
‘ Victim of fate he lies. Thou spare thine own :  
‘ We will appease thee, publicly atone ;  
‘ All that in food, in drink, we reft away,  
‘ Each shall with mulct of twenty beeves repay.

‘ And brass and gold shall satiate thy desire :  
‘ Till then, we may not blame thy righteous ire.’

‘ Eurymachus,’ Ulysses sternly said,  
‘ Were all your sire’s vast hoards before me laid,  
‘ And all you now possess, yea—more and more,  
‘ Ne’er should these hands abstain to shed your gore.  
‘ Now fight or fly : if flight can save your breath :  
‘ Yet none I deem shall ’scape the stroke of death.’

Faint at the word, their hearts within them died,  
When desperate, thus Eurymachus replied :

‘ O friends ! this man will ne’er his hand restrain,  
‘ Nor lay the bow and quiver down again,  
‘ Nor from the threshold cease the arrowy shower  
‘ Till all lie dead beneath his ruthless power.  
‘ Then rouse to battle, each unsheathe his sword,  
‘ Wield to repel his shafts the banquet board,  
‘ All, with one will, in one collected band  
‘ Rush, and invalidate his single hand.  
‘ If from the threshold we the murderer drive,  
‘ And thro’ the portal force our way alive,  
‘ The town will gather, roused at our alarm,  
‘ And the last shaft fall from his lifeless arm.’



Then forth his brazen twice-edged falchion drew,  
And with fierce outcry on Ulysses flew :  
But, at the moment, as he onward press'd,  
The king's preventive arrow pierced his breast,  
Fix'd in his liver : from his hand the sword  
Dropp'd, as the chief sank reeling round the board,  
And writhing fell : the food on earth was strow'd,  
From the huge bowl the wine untasted flow'd,  
His forehead struck the ground, and both his feet  
In quivering death-throes rock'd his rattling seat ;  
He sank in night. With fiery vengeance flush'd  
Against Ulysses bold Amphinomus rush'd,  
Rush'd opposite, and drew his vengeful brand,  
So might he force him from that vantage stand :  
But brave Telemachus, his sire to save,  
Flew, and his lance between his shoulders drave.  
He, thundering, fell—his broad front struck the floor :  
The prince drew back, and left, deep-bathed in gore,  
Left in Amphinomus' spine the buried lance,  
Lest as he drew it forth, in swift advance  
Some vengeful foe, should with unparried blade  
Obliquely pierce him, or in front invade ;  
Then backward to his father swiftly ran,  
Stood nigh, and thus with hurried speech began :

‘ Sire, I will bring thee arms, the helm and shield,  
‘ Again thy hand the warrior's lance shall wield :

‘ I too will arm myself, and either friend :  
‘ The man thus arm’d can best his life defend.’

‘ Speed,’ he replied, ‘ while yet an arrow left,  
‘ Lest back they force me of all aid bereft.’

The prince obey’d, and where the armour lay,  
On to the upper chamber wing’d his way,  
Four shields, eight spears, and four bright helmets bore,  
Whose crests waved terror their high summits o’er :  
Then, hast’ning back, reach’d his expectant sire,  
And foremost girt himself in war-attire,  
And the two friends, on watch their lord to aid,  
Stood at his side in radiant arms array’d,—  
But he himself, while yet a shaft remain’d,  
Deep in the suitors blood its point distain’d,  
In heaps they fell thus daringly assail’d,  
But when, death after death, the arrows fail’d,  
Propp’d on the column of the firm-built hall  
He leant his bow against the radiant wall,  
The four-fold shield around his shoulders braced,  
On his bold brow the well-framed helmet placed,  
And while its horse-hair round him terror waved,  
Grasp’d the two lances, and his foe-men braved.

There was a postern in the well-built wall  
That nigh the threshold of the banquet hall  
Led to the street : strong bars its door enclosed :  
There on Eumæus' strength the king reposed  
To guard that narrow passage, while appall'd,  
Thus Agelaüs to the suitors call'd :

‘ Friends, by yon postern will none hence ascend,  
‘ And bid the city timely succour send ?  
‘ The town would quickly rouse at his alarm,  
‘ And the last shaft fall from the murd’rer’s arm.’

‘ ’Tis vain the attempt, too near the lofty gate  
‘ Of the proud portal, and that pass too strait,’  
Melanthius spake, ‘ one guardian, brave and bold,  
‘ Might there against a host his station hold—  
‘ But from the chamber I will armour bring,  
‘ For, in that place alone, the wary king  
‘ And his son hid them.’

Forth Melanthius went  
And gain’d the chamber by its steep ascent :—  
Twelve shields, twelve spears, twelve brazen helmets  
sought,  
And to the impatient suitors quickly brought.

Then first Ulysses felt the sense of fear,  
As on they braced the arms, and grasp'd the spear.  
Hard now the toil, and hazardous the test,  
When the brave hero thus his son address'd :

‘ Or one of those vile female slaves, my son,  
‘ Or the base goat-herd has this evil done.’

‘ Mine was the fault,’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ None but myself, it shall not be denied.  
‘ I left incautiously the door unbarr’d,  
‘ Their spy perceived it, and none there on ward.  
‘ But go my brave Eumæus, close that gate,  
‘ And there in strict observance still await,  
‘ And mark if some vile woman, or the son  
‘ Of Dolius has this deed unjustly done.’

While thus they converse held, with fell intent  
Again Melanthius to the chamber went  
In search of arms,—Eumæus mark'd the man,  
And standing near Ulysses, thus began :

‘ ’Tis that pernicious man, he, whom we thought,  
‘ Now passes in,—that wretch the weapons brought.  
‘ Now, if my arm o’erpower him, truly say  
‘ Shall I at once that frontless villain slay,



‘ Or bring him to thy presence, to atone  
‘ For ills on ills beneath thy palace done ?’

‘ I, and my son,’ he said, ‘ howe’er they rage,  
‘ Will with the suitors here the contest wage :  
‘ While ye—his hands and feet behind him bound,  
‘ Cast down that villain on this guarded ground ;  
‘ Then close the gates, and draw him, chain’d on high,  
‘ Where the proud pillar rises loftily,  
‘ Close to the beams, that life may yet prolong  
‘ The torture due to insolence and wrong.”

They swift obey’d : and as he back return’d,  
The wretch no watcher of his path discern’d ;  
But where the armour stood in order stored  
Against the column, the recess explored.  
The watchers at each side their station kept :  
And when Melanthius o’er the threshold stept,  
And, in this hand, a beauteous helmet bore,  
In that, a shield, broad, ancient, rusted o’er ;  
Laertes’ shield, guard of his youth, in fight,  
Now loosed the seams that once had braced its might :  
On him they sprung, and by the hair held fast,  
Dragg’d him along, and on the pavement cast ;  
And as divine Ulysses had enjoin’d,  
Bound with harsh cord his hands and feet behind ;



Then to a lofty column, drawn on high,  
Left him to groan in lingering agony.

In stern derision then Eumæus spake,  
'Thou shalt at length Melanthius nightly wake,  
'In a soft couch, as suits thee well, repose,  
'Nor when the portals of the day unclose  
'Shall golden-throned Aurora 'scape thy view,  
'When forth thou lead'st thy kids to feast yon crew.'

They left him there, stretch'd on that ruthless cord,  
Then closed the gates, and sought in arms their lord.  
These four, upon the threshold's vantage ground,  
Stood in their strength, their foes fierce raging round,  
Many and valiant—then Minerva came,  
And mask'd like Mentor, changed her heavenly frame :  
Bold exultation fill'd Ulysses' breast,  
As the confiding chief her thus address'd :

'Now aid : on thee I call by friendship's claim :  
'Oft have I aided thee : our years the same.'

He spake, not doubting there Minerva stood,  
The while the suitors raved in furious mood :  
And Agelaüs, brave Damastor's son  
The Goddess thus reproving, first begun.

‘ Mentor ! beware ! let not that chief persuade  
‘ Thee to contend with us, or yield him aid.  
‘ Mark thou the event : when these our arms have slain,  
‘ And here the sire and son both dead remain,  
‘ Thou too with them : such deeds thou dared’st devise :  
‘ Wretch ! on thy head the self-drawn vengeance lies :  
‘ And when thou fall’st, the stores thy treasury yields,  
‘ All that thy palace holds, or fertile fields,  
‘ We mingle with the monarch’s : of thy race  
‘ None shall inherit their paternal place ;  
‘ Nor son, nor daughter, and thy widow’d wife,  
‘ Shall ne’er in Ithaca prolong her life.’

But Pallas, more and more with passion moved,  
Thus with indignant speech the king reproved :

‘ Not now as once, thy heart, not now thy might,  
‘ As when at Troy nine years thou stood’st the fight ;  
‘ Didst in perpetual slaughter onward move  
‘ For beauteous Helen, born of highest Jove,  
‘ When by thy counsel Troy was doom’d to fall,  
‘ And the vile dust strew’d Ilion’s prostrate wall.  
‘ But when thy wealth and palace thee demand,  
‘ Thou to thy spoilers yield’st thy feeble hand.—  
‘ Come forth, stand by me, and behold the deed,  
‘ Behold how Mentor in the hour of need,

‘ The son of Alcimus, shall now repay  
‘ ‘Mid foes the kindness of thy former day.’

But Pallas gave not victory too secure  
But would by further proof the hearts assure  
Of him and his brave son : then sprung aloof,  
And sat a swallow on the topmost roof.  
Then Agelaüs, brave Damastor’s son,  
Urged to the conflict bold Amphimedon,  
Euronimus, and Polybus the sage,  
And Demoptolemus the war to wage.  
These, o’er the rest preeminently brave,  
With desperate fury fought their lives to save.  
The bow and arrows had the rest subdued,  
When Agelaüs thus his speech renewed :

‘ This man, my friends, will soon from war abstain,  
‘ Mentor is vanished, all his boasts were vain.  
‘ These at the foremost gate unaided stand :  
‘ Hence, not at once all with unwary hand  
‘ Your weapons rashly shower ; but six alone :  
‘ So Jove may grant that by our power o’erthrown  
‘ Ulysses fall : and if Ulysses fall,  
‘ Easy the labour to o’ermaster all.’

Then, as he bade, each lanch'd his well-aim'd spear,  
But Pallas turn'd them on their wing'd career.  
This struck the post, that bounded from the gate,  
This on the wall infix'd its brazen weight :  
But when the weapons of the wooers fail'd,  
At stern Ulysses' word their spirits quail'd.

‘ Now, be on these, brave friends! your weapons cast,  
‘ Who ill-content with their vile deeds forepast  
‘ Long for our lives.’

They hurl'd at once their darts,  
And fix'd their weapons in the suitor's hearts.  
The king himself, Ulysses' well-aim'd blow,  
Laid Demoptolemus before him low  
His son's dire stroke Eurybates subdued,  
Pisander's blood Philœtius' lance embrued,  
His spear thro' Elatus Eumæus thrust,  
Prone all confusedly fell and gnaw'd the dust.  
The suitors to the dark recesses flew,  
While from the dead their arms the victors drew.  
The suitors then once more hurl'd spear on spear,  
But Pallas turn'd them on their wing'd career.  
This struck the post, that bounded on the gate,  
This on the wall infix'd its brazen weight :  
But keen Amphimedon's that lightly grazed  
The prince's wrist, its fleshy surface raised ;

Ctesippus' lance scarce drew Eumæus' gore,  
His shoulder touch'd, and glanced his buckler o'er,  
Then fell on earth. But round their monarch's stand  
His friends against the suitors' gather'd band  
Their lances hurl'd—the city-wasting king  
Fix'd in Eurydamas his death-barb'd sting:  
The prince's lance Amphimedon laid low,  
Sank Polybus beneath Eumæus' blow,  
Philætiüs struck Ctesippus on the breast,  
And as he bled exultantly address'd:

‘ Vile joker! ne'er again in boastful pride  
‘ Betray thy folly: let heaven's power decide.  
‘ This hospitable gift for thine receive,  
‘ That ox-hoof which thou deign'st Ulysses give,  
‘ A wanderer in his palace.’

With close wound  
Thy lance, Ulysses, levell'd on the ground  
Damastor's son. The prince in bold advance  
Thro' rash Leiocritus transfix'd his lance,  
His navel pierced, and thro' his entrails thrust:  
Full on his front he fell, and gnaw'd the dust.  
Then from the roof Minerva's vengeful hand  
Shook her dread Ægis o'er the guilty band:



All cower'd distraught, and thro' the palace fled,  
As herds, at spring-time, maddening in their dread,  
Rush from the gad-fly, 'neath whose whizzing wing  
The bellowing glades, and forests shrilly ring.  
But these, like crook'd-beak'd vultures, who on way  
From the high mountains dart upon their prey ;  
The innumerable birds that to the snare below  
Fly in their fear, and flutter to and fro,  
No rest, no refuge, while with keen delight  
The fowler on their capture feasts his sight :  
Not otherwise the avengers as they fled,  
Slew them at will, and crush'd each prostrate head :  
Dire burst the groan the mangled wretches o'er,  
And all the pavement floated, fill'd with gore.  
Then at Ulysses' knee Leiodes strove  
With voice of suppliant prayer his heart to move :

‘ Now while I kneel before thee, pity deign :  
‘ I ne’er abused, ne’er wrong’d thy female train  
‘ By word or deed, but o’er and o’er repress’d  
‘ From words impure, and lawless deeds, the rest,  
‘ Yet ill my voice was heard those chiefs among,  
‘ Therefore they justly perish’d in their wrong.  
‘ I am a blameless seer, if such thou slay,  
‘ No kind return will e’er kind deeds repay.’

‘ If thou,’ the king rejoin’d with voice severe,  
‘ If thou ’mid these didst boast thyself a seer,  
‘ How oft must thou have wish’d that lingering fate  
‘ Would long detain me from my palace gate,  
‘ So thou, bless’d seer, mightst clasp Ulysses’ wife :  
‘ Therefore all hope resign to ’scape with life.’

He said, and grasp’d the sword that nigh him lay,  
By Agelaüs cast in death away,  
And drove it thro’ his neck while yet he spoke  
The last word mingling with the vengeful stroke.

Then Phemius shuddering at the approach of death,  
The bard, who forced to waste his heavenly breath  
’Mid the fell suitors, nigh the postern door  
Stood, while his hand the harp celestial bore,  
Stood doubtful, whether rushing from the hall  
To gain, where rose before the palace wall,  
Great Jove’s Hercæan altar, at whose shrine  
Laertes and his son ’mid rites divine  
Their hecatombs had burnt, or there remain,  
Clasp the king’s knee, and soothe with plaintive strain.  
Yet to his wavering mind he deem’d it best  
At the king’s knee to urge his last request.  
Then soft he laid his harp on earth to lean  
The beaker and the silver throne between,

Moved on, and closely clasp'd Ulysses' knee,  
And sought to melt his soul imploringly :

‘ Thee I beseech, Ulysses ! deign to hear,  
‘ Hereafter thou wilt grieve if scorn'd my tear,  
‘ If scorn'd the bard, and hush'd in death the voice,  
‘ Whose melodies both gods and men rejoice,  
‘ The self-taught bard, whose power makes known to  
    earth,  
‘ All changeful harmonies of heavenly birth ;  
‘ To thee, as to a god, my grateful strain  
‘ Will rise, if thou from Phemius' blood refrain.  
‘ Thy son too, thy loved heir, bid him proclaim  
‘ That to thy house not willingly I came,  
‘ No craving bard the suitors' feast to cheer,  
‘ But powerful men here led, and force detain'd me here.’

Thus as he pray'd, the prince the minstrel heard,  
And check'd Ulysses by preventive word :

‘ Hold—wound him not—strike not his blameless  
    head :  
‘ Nor with the herald Medon swell the dead.  
‘ He, in our palace, in my tender year,  
‘ Hung o'er, and watch'd me with a father's fear.

‘ If yet he breathe, nor by our followers slain,  
‘ Nor met thee in thy wrath, from him abstain.’

The wary Medon heard him, where alone  
He prostrate lay beneath the banquet throne,  
And round him roll’d, of instant death afraid,  
The hide yet fuming of a bull new flay’d.  
Swift from the throne he sprung, cast off the hide,  
Close clasp’d the prince’s knee, and suppliant cried :

‘ I, I am here—O friend ! restrain thine ire,  
‘ And check the vengeance of thy slaughtering sire,  
‘ Enraged at those who wasted all his store,  
‘ Nor deign’d a thought on him they deem’d no more.’

Ulysses smiling said : ‘ Thy heart resume,  
‘ Since my son stands between thee, and thy doom :  
‘ But thou, and yon famed bard, this slaughter leave :  
‘ Haste to the outer court, while I achieve  
‘ Here, in these walls, my fated work assign’d.’

They went, and at the altar’s base reclined  
Of the Hercæan Jove : yet gazed around,  
And fear’d, where’er they gazed, a coming wound.

Then round the hall the monarch turn'd his sight,  
Lest some lone fugitive yet saw the light ;  
But all, he all beheld, the numerous train,  
Wallowing in blood and dust, confusedly slain,  
Like fishes, whom the seamen on the strand  
With many a meshed net have cast on land,  
Dragg'd from the hoary main, there heap on heap  
They flounce athirst to taste the briny deep,  
While high o'er head the sunbeam's scorching ray  
Draws out at every gasp their strength away,  
The suitors thus, confusedly as they died  
Lay on each other.

‘ Son,’ Ulysses cried,  
‘ Haste—Euryclea call : her faithful ear  
‘ Will, what my mind suggests, attentive hear.’

He spake : Telemachus his sire obey'd,  
Shook Euryclea's door, and swiftly said :

‘ Come forth, time-honour'd nurse, whose watchful eye  
‘ O'er all the females rules attentively,  
‘ My sire awaits thee.’

At her lord's command  
She oped the door with no reluctant hand.



The prince led on her step—and now they found  
Ulysses by the dead encircled round,  
Dappled with gore and dust. The avenger stood  
Like a fell lion gorged with recent blood  
Slow stalking from the stall, his bristling crest,  
His cheeks on either side, his foaming breast,  
Horrific to behold, distilling gore,  
From head to foot with slaughter crimson'd o'er :  
Thus in the strength of his o'erpowering might,  
The stern avenger stood before her sight.  
And as she view'd, bathed in their blood, the dead,  
And the great work of vengeance perfected,  
Loud burst the exultation of her breast,  
When thus the king her shout of joy repress'd :

‘ Be glad at heart ; but this wild joy restrain ;  
‘ We may not rightly triumph o’er the slain.  
‘ Them their vile deeds, and heaven’s just wrath o’erthrew :  
‘ They who of human kind no reverence knew,  
‘ The good, the bad, alike, whoever came ;  
‘ Therefore they perish’d in their deeds of shame.  
‘ But unto me the females now record,  
‘ Those who disgraced or rightly served their lord.’

‘ Yes, thou shalt hear the truth,’ the nurse replied,  
‘ Full fifty females ’neath thy roof abide ;

‘ These we have taught to toil, the wool to comb,  
‘ And bear the yoke that binds the slave to home :  
‘ But twelve of these beyond the bounds of shame,  
‘ Mine, and the queen’s commands alike disclaim.  
‘ Thy son, in manhood’s prime, the queen’s command  
‘ Forbade to rule at will the female band.  
‘ But let me seek her room, and all disclose,  
‘ Where soothed by heaven she lies in sweet repose.’

‘ No—wake her not,’ he said, ‘ but hither send  
‘ Those whose disgraceful deeds the gods offend.’

Forth from the chamber Euryclea went,  
And to their lord the summon’d females sent.  
Meanwhile the monarch to his faithful band,  
And his loved son thus utter’d his command :

‘ Haste—bid these women aid—bear forth the slain ;  
‘ And from the seats and tables sponge each stain ;  
‘ And when within all ranged, in order all,  
‘ Lead them reluctant from the stately hall,  
‘ And ’mid the scullery and the court-yard bound,  
‘ With your keen weapons gash with many a wound,  
‘ Till ye let loose their souls, and death remove  
‘ The last remembrance of their shameful love.’

He spake : the women came confusedly on,  
Shed bitter tears, and mingled groan with groan.  
First they brought forth the dead, and sorrowing flung  
Where o'er the heap the porch its shadow hung ;  
Ulysses urged their toil, while forced and faint  
They bore the bodies out by harsh constraint ;  
Then to their former purity restored,  
Sponged the bright thrones, and laved each festive board.  
The prince and his associates, o'er and o'er,  
With restless besoms cleansed the stony floor :  
The maids bore out the soil. Thus order'd all,  
They led the women from the well-based hall,  
And 'mid the dome and court, in narrowest room  
Thrust them, close pent, where none might 'scape their  
doom.

The prince then spake : ' Not with a noble death  
' Will I deprive these wretches of their breath,  
' These who oft heap'd their insults on my head,  
' And scorn'd the queen, and shared the suitors' bed.'

He spake, and from a stately column wound  
A ship's strong cord, and girt the dome around,  
Drew it aloft, that none, thus high upraised,  
Could with stretch'd foot the ground have lightly grazed.

As doves or broad wing'd thrushes, who, on flight  
Amid the thickets, in a net alight,  
Ill resting find, thus these together strung,  
In wretchedest of deaths suspended hung :  
And now in life's last throb, as ceased the breath,  
Quiver'd their feet, then—motionless in death.  
Now thro' the hall and porch the avengers drew  
Melanthius forth, and, mutilating, slew,  
Sheer'd off his ears and nose, and pluck'd away  
His manly parts, and cast to dogs a prey.  
Then cleansed from recent gore their hands and feet,  
And to the hall return'd the king to greet.  
All was consummated, when thus their lord,  
To faithful Euryclea, spake the word :

‘ Haste ! fire and sulphur bring, that I once more  
‘ May purify the house from death and gore.  
‘ And bid Penelope now meet me here,  
‘ And with their sovereign all her train appear.’

‘ ’Tis right,’ the nurse replied, ‘ I too will bring  
‘ Fit vest and royal robes that suit the king.  
‘ Not in these rags be seen ; not thus disgrace  
‘ The state and splendour of thy ancient race.’

‘ Here foremost bring the fire,’ the king replied,  
‘ First be the palace duly purified.’

The nurse, obedient to her king’s desire,  
The sulphur brought and fumigating fire :  
But he himself, intent, from side to side,  
The hall, the court, and palace purified,  
While Euryclea bade the maids obey,  
And to Ulysses’ presence urged their way.  
With torches in their hand, they onward sped,  
Hail’d their loved lord, and kiss’d his hand and head—  
Soft grief o’ercame him, and a tear of woe  
Pregnant with all the past, was seen to flow.



THE TWENTY-THIRD BOOK  
OF  
THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

The interview of Ulysses and Penelope: they recount all that intervened during their long separation.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XXIII.

THE nurse, exultant, sought the upper floor  
To tell the queen her lord was there once more.  
Her knees new strength assumed, nor feebly moved  
The foot of age to greet her child beloved.

‘ Arise,’ she cried, ‘ Penelope ! arise,  
‘ On him, for ever long’d for, fix thine eyes.  
‘ Tho’ late, Ulysses is return’d again,  
‘ Lord of his palace, all the suitors slain,  
‘ All who his house despoil’d, his wealth devour’d,  
‘ And, scornful in their strength, his son o’erpower’d.’

‘ Kind nurse !’ the wise Penelope replied,  
‘ The gods, no doubt, have turn’d thy brain aside,  
‘ Who stupify the wise, and if inclined  
‘ Give wisdom to the soft and simple mind :

‘ So heaven has wrong’d thee, once for sense renown’d.  
‘ Why mock’st thou me in deepest misery drown’d,  
‘ Relating such untruths? why wake to weep  
‘ From the sweet solace of unwonted sleep?  
‘ Such as I ne’er enjoy’d since that fell hour  
‘ When arm’d Ulysses sought that nameless tower.  
‘ But now descend, back to thy room again:  
‘ Know too, if one, save thou, of all my train,  
‘ Such tales had told, and robb’d of sleep my bed,  
‘ My rage had sorely lighted on her head,  
‘ Back I had sent her from my sight away;  
‘ Thy age and former deeds my wrath allay.’

‘ I mock thee not, loved child,’ the nurse replied,  
‘ Here now, beneath this roof, a god his guide,  
‘ Ulysses is return’d.—’Tis he, that guest,  
‘ That beggar scorn’d of all, the public guest.  
‘ The prince his sire’s return has long-time known,  
‘ But kept the secret in his breast alone,  
‘ That righteous vengeance might its plan mature,  
‘ And at due time the suitors’ death assure.’

The queen rejoiced, and darting from her bed,  
Embraced her nurse, and tears of transport shed:

‘ If true,’ the queen replied, ‘ if here once more  
‘ Ulysses breathe, O tell me o’er and o’er  
‘ How could his strength defeat that shameless band,  
‘ How slay such numbers with his single hand ?’

‘ I saw not—none inform’d me,’ she replied,  
‘ But my ear caught their groaning as they died.  
‘ In our room’s deep recess, we, troubled, staid,  
‘ And the doors closely barr’d our step delay’d,  
‘ Till thy son call’d me forth—At his desire  
‘ I hasten’d to the summons of his sire,  
‘ And found Ulysses standing ’mid the dead :  
‘ They on the floor stretch’d out, head heap’d on head.  
‘ Thou wouldst have joy’d that slaughter to behold,  
‘ That blood-bathed lion ’mid the murder’d fold—  
‘ In the fore-court they lie.—With sulphurous fume  
‘ The avenger’s torch now purifies the room.  
‘ He waits thy coming : follow where I lead,  
‘ That ye may yield your hearts, from misery freed,  
‘ To mutual, full enjoyment.—’Tis complete  
‘ Your utmost wish : in his paternal seat  
‘ On his own hearth he breathes, and thee has found,  
‘ And him who all a father’s hope has crown’d  
‘ Beneath his dome : and in his outraged hall  
‘ The suitors by his vengeance perish’d, all.’



‘ O nurse beloved,’ the prudent queen replied,  
‘ Not thus, too joyful, cast all doubt aside.  
‘ Thou know’st how glad to all his presence here,  
‘ And most to me, and him we joy’d to rear.  
‘ But ’tis not as thou say’st.—Some god has slain  
‘ In wrath for their misdeeds that impious train.  
‘ None they revered: on all their scornful shame,  
‘ The good and bad alike, whoever came.  
‘ For their vile deeds they died: but he no more  
‘ Returns; death holds him on a foreign shore.’

‘ Why,’ the nurse answer’d, ‘ whence this hasty word?  
‘ Why dost thou deem that here thy living lord  
‘ No more returns? incredulous thy breast.  
‘ Hear me, nor disbelieve the certain test:  
‘ The scar, by that boar-tusk so deeply made,  
‘ Now, as I laved his limbs, thy lord betray’d.  
‘ Fain had I told thee, but my lip he closed,  
‘ And on his wisdom I in peace reposed.  
‘ But follow: my pledged life to thee I leave;  
‘ Be mine the bitterest death if I deceive.’

‘ Wise as thou art,’ Penelope return’d,  
‘ The counsels of the gods thou hast not learn’d.  
‘ But haste we to my son, at once to view  
‘ The suitors slain, and him who greatly slew.’

Then, from her room pass'd down: and much her  
heart  
Waver'd, to question her loved lord apart,  
Or clasp at once his hand, and kiss his head.  
Thus entering in, she o'er the threshold sped,  
And opposite Ulysses fix'd her throne,  
Where from the hearth the blazing fire-flame shone.  
He 'gainst a lofty column sat reclined,  
Cast down his eyes, and with expectant mind  
Waited what word might haply greet his ear  
When first his peerless wife beheld him near.  
Long mute, amazement all her soul subdued,  
Now, gazing on him, 'twas himself she view'd,  
Now knew him not, thus clothed.—At length, sore  
moved,  
Telemachus his mother thus reproved;

' Ah! hapless mother! with unbending mind  
' Why shun my father—wherefore thus disjoin'd?  
' Why not accost him, and the truth explore,  
' Nor ask a thousand questions o'er and o'er?  
' Who but thyself, obdurate as thou art,  
' Could from her toil-worn husband stand apart?  
' Who home returns the twentieth year now gone.  
' Thy heart is harder than the unfeeling stone.'

‘ My son,’ the sage Penelope rejoin’d,  
‘ Awe and astonishment have stunn’d my mind.  
‘ I cannot speak, nor question him, nor dare  
‘ Look on his face, and what I feel declare.  
‘ But if not false, if true what I discern,  
‘ And here Ulysses to his house return,  
‘ We shall each other know, when once reveal’d  
‘ Signs from all others, save ourselves, conceal’d.’

Pleased at her word, divine Ulysses smiled,  
And swiftly thus address’d his much-loved child :

‘ Nay, let thy mother try me, prove at will,  
‘ Then shall mature conviction all fulfil.  
‘ Now, since these shameful rags her sight deceive,  
‘ She fears to own, nor dares her sense believe.  
‘ But weigh we what is best : now timely plan :  
‘ He who has reft of life one single man,  
‘ Tho’ few the avengers of his death arise,  
‘ Far from his kindred and his country flies ;  
‘ But we the noblest of the isle have slain—  
‘ Then what thy counsel, fearlessly explain.’

‘ Do thou thyself,’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ Speak what is best—do thou alone decide.

‘ Thy wisdom all transcends, thy prudent mind  
‘ ’Tis widely echo’d, passes all mankind :  
‘ We gladly follow : and if force avail,  
‘ If valour can assist, we shall not fail.’

‘ Hear then, my son,’ the prudent chief rejoin’d,  
‘ What most accords with my revolving mind :  
‘ First, bathe, and robe yourself with festive vest,  
‘ Then be the females in gay garments dress’d,  
‘ And let the minstrel sweep the heavenly lyre,  
‘ And prelude to the dance the joyful choir,  
‘ That whosoe’er may chance the strain to hear,  
‘ Shall deem that nuptial revels charm the ear :  
‘ Spread not abroad a rumour of the slain,  
‘ Till we revisit my well planted plain :  
‘ There we will ponder what may profit best,  
‘ If Jove, what best may profit, deign suggest.’

Ulysses spake, they willingly obey’d,  
Bathed, and in radiant robes themselves array’d ;  
Robed were the females in their rich attire,  
And the skill’d minstrel sweetly swept the lyre  
That woke the wish, and led the choir along  
To weave the dance, and swell the harmonious song,  
And the roof rung re-echoing to the beat  
Of youths and maidens’ dance-immingled feet.—

And thus the passers spoke who heard the sound :

‘ New nuptial chains, the queen, long woo’d, have  
bound.

‘ Ah ! she no more her former state sustains,

‘ Nor, for the lord that clasp’d her youth, remains.’

Thus they unconscious. While with pleasing toil  
Euronyme bathed, and smooth’d with fragrant oil  
Ulysses’ limbs : then gracefully around  
His freshen’d frame a robe and tunic wound.  
Pallas with grace divine his head array’d,  
And all his form more large, more lofty, made,  
And like the hyacinthian flowrets roll’d  
His clustering locks in many a waving fold.  
As the famed workman, to whose peerless art  
Pallas and Vulcan deign their skill impart,  
Round burnish’d silver pours the flowing gold,  
And works achieves all wondrous to behold.  
Thus beam’d his face and form, when forth he trod  
Fresh from the bath in likeness of a god,  
Then seated on a throne to her’s opposed  
To his loved consort thus his mind disclosed :

‘ Surely the gods, o’er all of womankind,

‘ Have steel’d thee with the impenetrable mind.



‘ No other wife, but thou, but thou alone,  
‘ Would from her consort, as from one unknown,  
‘ Thus stand apart from him who worn with toil,  
‘ Regains, twice ten years pass’d, his native soil.  
‘ But, nurse! prepare my couch : there let me rest,  
‘ Since hard as iron her unfeeling breast.’

‘ Nay,’ she replied, ‘ I nought too highly deem,  
‘ Nor lightly rate below its just esteem,  
‘ Nor senselessly admire. I yet retain  
‘ What once thou wert when cross’d by thee the main.  
‘ But go, my nurse, and be his couch now laid  
‘ Without the chamber by his labour made ;  
‘ There his soft bed prepare, and o’er it throw  
‘ Fine fleeces, and bright rugs of radiant glow.’

She spake—her cautious speech Ulysses tried.  
When thus her lord indignantly replied :

‘ O woman ! thou a bitter word hast said.  
‘ Who in a different place that bed has laid ?  
‘ ’Twere hard for one well skill’d—A heavenly hand  
‘ Alone could move it from its former stand.  
‘ No living man, not in youth’s utmost force,  
‘ Could from its seat that bed with ease divorce :

‘ For in that labour’d bed a mighty sign  
‘ Resides : I made it, and no hand but mine.  
‘ A broad leaved olive in the court up-grew,  
‘ And as a stately column tower’d on view :  
‘ Round this, with stones on stones, an ample store,  
‘ I built my nuptial bower, and roof’d it o’er,  
‘ And with glued portals hung : then lopp’d away  
‘ The broad leaved foliage from each olive spray.  
‘ Then to the root cut down, with skilful art  
‘ I smooth’d the trunk, and fashion’d every part  
‘ Strait by the guiding line : the base thus wrought,  
‘ I with the auger all in order brought.  
‘ Thence, polishing the bed, I round it roll’d  
‘ Plates of bright silver, ivory, and gold,  
‘ And laced with cordage bright with purple stain.  
‘ Such is the sign ; but if that bed remain  
‘ Unmoved, I know not, or, now forced away,  
‘ Some hand has cut the root, whereon it lay.’

He spake : his wife each well known sign recalls :  
Her soul dissolves away, she faints, she falls ;  
Her tears gush’d forth, at once she upward sprung,  
Clasp’d him, and on his neck in transport hung,  
And kiss’d him o’er and o’er :

‘ With eye unkind  
‘ O look not on me, wisest of mankind !

‘ The gods thus will’d, who in sweet union bless’d  
‘ From youth to age here envied us to rest.  
‘ Be not indignant that when first I view’d,  
‘ I clasp’d thee not, by fear awhile subdued :  
‘ For ceaselessly a horror iced my heart  
‘ Lest I should fall a prey to guileful art,  
‘ Lest some deluder should my soul deceive ;  
‘ For many are the tongues that falsehood weave.  
‘ No, not the Argive Helen born of Jove,  
‘ Had yielded to a stranger’s pleaded love,  
‘ Had she but known that Grecia’s sons in arms  
‘ Would league to rescue her unhappy charms.  
‘ Some god her guilt aroused : hence sprung the thought  
‘ Whose evil first on us affliction brought.  
‘ Now—since by thee most clear each sign reveal’d  
‘ Of our loved couch from all but us conceal’d,  
‘ Known but to us, and one entrusted maid,  
‘ My father’s gift, who here her charge convey’d,  
‘ Loved Actoris the guardian of our rest,—  
‘ Now, on thy bosom melts my iron breast.’

Her speech yet more his tears of transport moved  
Which as he clasp’d her bathed that breast beloved.  
As when to those, who, ’mid the billows’ roar,  
Cleave the dark waves, appears the neighbouring shore,

When the Sea-God beneath the o'ersurging deep  
Has wreck'd their vessel in the tempest's sweep,  
When few, long struggling, 'scape at length to land,  
And the brine crusts them shivering on the strand;  
Thus on her lord she gazed, nor ere unbound  
Her white arms closely clasp'd his neck around.  
Now on their tears the dawn had daylight brought,  
Had not another plan Minerva wrought :  
Check'd, ere yet reach'd the goal, the westering night,  
And in the deep detain'd the gold-throned light,  
Nor suffer'd the swift steeds that day awoke,  
Lampus and Phaëton to bear the yoke,  
Relumining the earth. Then, thus address'd,  
He communed with the partner of his breast :

‘ O wife ! not yet we touch woe's utmost goal,  
‘ A load of misery yet weighs down my soul,  
‘ Dire toils I must endure. Tiresias' shade  
‘ The dread injunction on my spirit laid,  
‘ When on my friends' return, and mine, intent,  
‘ I to the house of Hades boldly went—  
‘ But to our couch now come, there sink to rest,  
‘ There in each others arms supremely bless'd.’

‘ The couch awaits thee,’ the fair queen rejoind,  
‘ Whene'er most grateful to thy willing mind,



‘ Since heaven has sent thee to possess again  
‘ Thy stately palace and ancestral reign.  
‘ But as thy speech has glanced at future woes  
‘ Doom’d by the gods, the dangers now disclose,  
‘ And since the truth hereafter must be known,  
‘ I better shall sustain the fate foreshown.’

‘ Why bidst thou me disclose it ?’ he replied,  
‘ Yet ne’er will I from thee a secret hide.  
‘ But thou wilt not rejoice to hear my fate,  
‘ Nor shall I joy the sequel to relate.  
‘ Tiresias bade me many a realm explore,  
‘ And bear, where’er my way, a well made oar,  
‘ So wander on, nor turn my course aside,  
‘ Till reach’d a race unconscious of the tide,  
‘ Who know not salt, nor e’er have seen the sweep  
‘ Of oars that wing the vessel thro’ the deep.  
‘ Now hear the sign, from thee I hide it not,  
‘ When I shall meet on that predestined spot  
‘ A wanderer, who beholding me declares  
‘ The oar a winnow that my shoulder bears,  
‘ There I must plant it in the earth, and slay  
‘ To the great God whose voice the waves obey,  
‘ A ram, a bull, and boar : then home return,  
‘ And hecatombs in solemn order burn



‘ To all the gods : then slow approaching death  
‘ Shall far from ocean steal away my breath  
‘ In the soft lapse of age, while round me dwell  
‘ My subjects bless’d. He spake, and bade farewell.’

‘ Yes,’ she replied, ‘ if heaven thus bless thy age,  
‘ Life’s peaceful close shall every ill assuage.’

While thus they converse held, their favourite maid  
And the aged nurse their nuptial couch array’d  
Beneath the torches’ blaze. The couch now spread,  
The nurse retiring sought her peaceful bed.  
Euronyme alone prepared their way,  
And led them by her flambeau’s guiding ray,  
Then back return’d : while they in love’s delight,  
Enjoy’d as once their bed’s connubial rite.  
But their loved son, and either faithful swain  
Ceased from the dance, and still’d the female train,  
All peaceful slept. And now when love had rest,  
And satiate joy had tranquillized their breast,  
Then o’er and o’er Ulysses and his queen  
Told in sweet converse all that pass’d between  
Their parting, and return—She dwelt again  
On the proud wooers and their wasteful train,  
How, courting her, his flocks and herds they slew,  
And from his cells the wine profusely drew.

Ulysses told what battles he had gain'd,  
What toils endured, what miseries sustain'd.  
She heard enchanted, and, till all exposed,  
Ne'er the soft hand of sleep his eyelid closed.  
He told how first he slew Ciconia's host,  
And how he reach'd the Lotophagian coast ;  
Told what the Cyclops wrought, and how his hand  
Blinded the wretch who gorged alive his band :  
How he in Æolus' dome found welcome rest,  
Who kindly greeted, and sent forth his guest ;  
How then not fated to regain his shore,  
But toss'd by tempests the dark ocean o'er.  
He told of Læstrygonians, whose fell crew  
His fleet destroy'd, and all his comrades slew,  
How he alone escaped : then told the wiles  
Of tempting Circe, and her various guiles :  
Told how he sail'd to hell's horrific gloom,  
From sage Tiresias' shade to learn his doom :  
How all his friends there view'd, and those among  
The mother on whose breast his childhood hung :  
Told how he listen'd to the Syren strain,  
And pass'd the rocks that clash amid the main  
The horror of Charybdis, Scylla's roar,  
Rocks which ne'er man unharm'd had pass'd before :  
Told how his crew the Sun's own herd had slain,  
And how Jove's bolt had split his ship in twain,

How all his friends, together, perish'd, all,  
When he alone survived to mourn their fall:  
Then of Ogygia, and Calypso's charms,  
Who sweetly woo'd him to her wedded arms,  
Held in her cave, and with enticing breath,  
Vow'd he should live for ever, free from death,  
But fail'd to win his heart: then dwelt on toil  
And perils ere he reach'd Phæacia's soil;  
How, like a god, they honour'd him, and gave  
A ship to waft him homeward o'er the wave,  
With many a gift, bright raiments richly stored,  
Brass, and much gold, the inestimable hoard.  
This, the last tale, his long adventures closed,  
When sleep came down, and all his cares reposed.

Now, when Minerva deem'd sleep's soft controul,  
And satiate love had calm'd Ulysses' soul,  
The Goddess roused from ocean's peaceful bed  
The gold-throned morn her light o'er earth to shed:  
Then rose Ulysses from his couch of rest,  
And to his much loved wife these words address'd:

‘ Relentless misery long has rack'd our heart,  
‘ Long hast thou wept thy husband far apart,  
‘ While Jove and all the gods my course restrain'd,  
‘ And with dire toils my wish'd return detain'd.

‘ Now, since we thus have met in bliss once more,  
‘ Guard what is left of my paternal store.  
‘ The herds and flocks those wasteful guests consumed,  
‘ Part shall by me by plunder be resumed,  
‘ Part shall the Achæans willingly restore,  
‘ Till all my stalls are crowded as of yore.  
‘ But now I haste to my thick-planted field,  
‘ To my loved sire some solace yet to yield :  
‘ Yet ere we part, I previously advise  
‘ Thee whose self-counsel might alone suffice—  
‘ With the new dawn the bruit will swiftly spread  
‘ Of those beneath my vengeance lately dead,  
‘ Then to thy upper room, loved wife, retire,  
‘ There rest, nor gaze abroad, nor aught enquire.’

He spake, and, brightly arm’d, at dawn of day  
Drove from his son and friends soft sleep away,  
And bade them arm : they arm’d, and swiftly sped  
Where’er the way their monarch onward led,  
And when day beam’d, Minerva’s guardian might  
Forth from the city led them hid in night.





THE TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK  
OF  
THE ODYSSEY.

#### ARGUMENT.

Hermes conducts the souls of the suitors to Hades. The recognition of Laertes and Ulysses. Ulysses, by the assistance of Minerva, defeats the people of Ithaca who had risen in arms to avenge the slaughter of their chiefs. The Goddess reconciles the king and people.

# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK XXIV.

Now Mercury, Cyllene's guardian god,  
The suitors' souls evoking, waved the rod,  
The beauteous golden rod, of power to close  
The lids in sleep, or raise from still repose :  
With this he led them.—They, where'er he went  
Shrill-shrieking follow'd. As in darkness pent  
In the deep cave's recess, the bats on flight  
Shrill-squeak, when haply from the rocky height  
One from their cluster falls, then all the rest  
Fall on each other clinging breast to breast :  
Thus they together shrilly-shrieking flow'd  
Where Hermes led them to their last abode :  
They pass'd the rock Leucadian, ocean's streams,  
And the Sun's gate, and peopled realm of dreams :  
And soon they reach'd the Asphodelian plain,  
Where souls, the shadows of the dead, remain.

And there before them, an impassive shade,  
The spirit of Pelides tower'd display'd,  
Antilochus, Patroclus, and the might  
Of Ajax, first in majesty of height  
Save Peleus' son, the goddess-born renown'd;  
And where Achilles tower'd the rest came gathering  
round.

Atrides mournful came, and with their lord  
Shades of the murder'd in that house abhorr'd,  
Ægisthus' dome; and as he onward press'd,  
Pelides first the mournful shade address'd:

‘ Atrides! thee, all heroes far above  
‘ We deem'd most honour'd by protecting Jove  
‘ When 'neath thy sway, that brave, that numerous  
band  
‘ Fought while we labour'd on Troy's hostile land:  
‘ Yet first to thee was doom'd pernicious death  
‘ That none escape once warm'd by vital breath.  
‘ Would that in Troy, in all thy regal pride,  
‘ In all thy glory thou hadst nobly died,  
‘ Then all the Greeks thy honour'd tomb had raised,  
‘ And on thy son transmitted glory blazed.  
‘ Not such thy doom; 'twas fatally decreed  
‘ That thou by death most vile shouldst basely bleed.’

‘ Bless’d son of Peleus,’ Atreus’ son replied,  
‘ Thou, like the gods, Achaia’s guard and guide,  
‘ Who far from Argos diedst on Ilion’s plain,  
‘ And round thee either host’s high leaders slain  
‘ Striving for thee, while ’neath war’s dusty storm  
‘ Lay in large space, stretch’d out, thy large-limb’d form,  
‘ Regardless of the battle.—All that day  
‘ We fought, nor ere had ceased the unyielding fray  
‘ Save by the bolt of Jove. From forth the dead  
‘ We bore thee to our fleet, and strow’d thy bed,  
‘ Then laid thee laved, and bathing o’er and o’er  
‘ With odoriferous unguent, cleansed from gore :  
‘ On thee the Grecians pour’d a nation’s tear,  
‘ And shear’d their locks to decorate thy bier.  
‘ Thy mother heard thy fate, and from the main  
‘ Rose with the sea-nymphs to lament the slain :  
‘ O’er the wide waves a mighty clamour spread,  
‘ And all the Grecian army shook with dread,  
‘ And all up-rushing had their vessels gain’d  
‘ Had not the experienced chief the host detain’d,  
‘ Nestor, whose sense and counsel all excell’d,  
‘ And thus advising, their deep fear dispell’d :—

‘ Stay—lo ! the mother from the ocean womb,  
‘ At the first rumour of her offspring’s doom



‘ Emerges with the sea-nymphs.—As he spoke  
‘ The Grecians staid, and from their fear awoke.  
‘ The daughters of the Ancient of the sea  
‘ Thee with ambrosial raiment splendidly  
‘ Robed, while they wept : and with alternate strain  
‘ All the nine Muses mourn’d the hero slain,  
‘ And none so harsh that fail’d to shed the tear,  
‘ So sweet the muse that sorrow’d o’er thy bier !—  
‘ For seventeen days, thro’ every night and day  
‘ Both gods and men mourn’d thee who senseless lay ;  
‘ The eighteenth day bright flamed thy funeral bed,  
‘ And sheep and beeves innumerable round thee bled,  
‘ While in the raiment of the gods array’d  
‘ Thou wert in fragrant oil and honey laid.  
‘ And many a Grecian chief in war attire  
‘ Clash’d in the contest round thy burning pyre,  
‘ Horsemen and foot, and loud the clamour rose :  
‘ And when the flame now languish’d to its close,  
‘ At dawn we gather’d thy white bones, and placed,  
‘ Bathed in pure wine, and with rich unguents graced,  
‘ In a bright vase elaborate in gold,  
‘ That Thetis gave thy last remains to hold,  
‘ The gift of Bacchus, and divinely wrought  
‘ With all that Vulcan to perfection brought.  
‘ There thy white bones are laid, and there with thine  
‘ Thy loved Patroclus’ last remains combine,

‘ And there Antilochus’s rest apart,  
‘ Who, when Patroclus died, most shared thy heart.  
‘ O’er both thus laid, the Argives sacred host  
‘ On the broad Hellespont’s projecting coast  
‘ Piled a vast mound, a monument sublime,  
‘ A sea-mark seen afar by all succeeding time.  
‘ Then, by the gods’ consent, thy mother placed  
‘ In the throng’d circus gifts that heroes graced.  
‘ Oft at the funerals of the mighty dead  
‘ Or on the bier where lay a monarch’s head,  
‘ Where the zoned youths contending for the prize,  
‘ Gifts of rare worth have fix’d my wondering eyes,  
‘ But those the silver-footed Thetis gave,  
‘ To add high honour to thy glorious grave,  
‘ Far above all my admiration moved ;  
‘ For thou by all the gods wert most beloved.  
‘ Thus death ne’er injured thy immortal name,  
‘ And times unborn shall swell Achilles’ fame.  
‘ But what my joy, dire war’s long labours o’er ?  
‘ But what my welcome to my native shore ?  
‘ Jove doom’d me there to close a toil-worn life  
‘ By vile Ægisthus, and the accursed wife.’

Thus they—while Hermes to hell’s dark domain  
Lied on the suitors by Ulysses slain.

Both, wondering, tow'rds them drew, when Atreus' son  
Knew, as he view'd far famed Amphimedon,  
Of old in Ithaca his welcomed guest,  
And thus Atrides' shade the chief address'd :

‘ By what mischance, why tread this nether earth,  
‘ Selected all, and all of equal birth ?  
‘ None, were the prime drawn out from all the land,  
‘ Could from the nation cull a nobler band.  
‘ Did Neptune hurl you to untimely graves  
‘ By stormy tempests, and the war of waves ?  
‘ Or valorous foemen on the mainland slay  
‘ Driving the herds, and fleecy flocks away ?  
‘ Or fell you for your wives and children slain ?  
‘ To me, your guest of yore, the truth explain.  
‘ Dost thou forget that to thy hearth I came  
‘ With Menelaus to avenge his shame,  
‘ And rouse Ulysses with his naval host  
‘ To join the assembled Greeks on Ilion's coast,  
‘ And when we scarcely could the hero gain,  
‘ A month pass'd o'er us traversing the main ?

‘ Most glorious chief,' Amphimedon replied,  
‘ Atrides, king of men, the nation's, Grecia's guide,  
‘ I all remember, and will now relate  
‘ Our death how destined by remorseless fate—

‘ We the fair wife of lost Ulysses woo’d,  
‘ Who nor our suit accepted, nor withstood,  
‘ Our death devising, while from us aloof  
‘ She wove in secresy a treacherous woof,  
‘ Web of the subtlest thread, and largest size,  
‘ And thus dissembling, spake in specious guise :

‘ Youths, who here woo me, since Ulysses died,  
‘ Not to fresh nuptials urge the unwilling bride,  
‘ Till I have duly perfected the veil,  
‘ Lest incomplete my former labour fail,  
‘ Shroud of Laertes, when long lingering death  
‘ Shall close at last that hero’s sacred breath ;  
‘ Lest ’mid the people each Achæan dame  
‘ Hurl on my head not undeserved blame,  
‘ If he who long in life such wealth possess’d  
‘ Should lie entomb’d without a funeral vest.  
‘ We all approved : and underneath the sun  
‘ Her hand each day the eternal web begun,  
‘ That web which ever by the torch’s light  
‘ Her hand still ravell’d night succeeding night.  
‘ Three years the treacherous labour she pursued,  
‘ But when the fourth the circling moons renew’d,  
‘ Warn’d by a maiden conscious of her guile,  
‘ We went and caught her in her secret wile :



‘ And thus by harsh necessity compell’d  
‘ The work was wrought that every web excell’d,  
‘ And shone, fresh laved within the crystal stream,  
‘ Bright as the moon, or sun’s meridian beam.  
‘ Then some stern god Ulysses brought again  
‘ Where dwelt Eumæus on our furthest plain :  
‘ And there his son from Pylos’ sandy shore  
‘ O’er ocean sail’d, and gain’d his realm once more.  
‘ They to the city, with revengeful aim  
‘ Death to the wooers meditating, came.  
‘ First came the son, then, by Eumæus led,  
‘ As one bow’d down by age, with hoary head,  
‘ Slow, leaning on his staff, the unknown sire  
‘ Like a mean beggar, mask’d in vile attire.  
‘ None then, as thus he enter’d unaware,  
‘ No, not an elder knew Laertes’ heir.  
‘ With many a blow, and insolent reproof  
‘ We wrong’d the chief beneath his palace roof,  
‘ While thus reproved, thus struck, with patient mind  
‘ The king beneath his palace bow’d resign’d.  
‘ But, when aroused by Jove, Ulysses bore  
‘ With his brave son the arms collected store,  
‘ And in the chamber at his will disposed,  
‘ And with strong bolts the portals firmly closed,  
‘ His was the counsel, his the subtle art  
‘ That bade the partner of his house and heart



‘ Before us place the bars, and fatal bow,  
‘ Test of our strength, and prelude of our woe.  
‘ Not all the vigour of our youth prevail’d,  
‘ And every aim to stretch the bow-string fail’d.  
‘ But when the weapon to its master’s arm  
‘ Eumæus proffer’d, all with wild alarm  
‘ Bade him refuse it to his earnest prayer,  
‘ All but the unknown chief’s consenting heir.  
‘ Then, firmly grasp’d, with graceful ease the king  
‘ Bent the huge bow, and threaded every ring :  
‘ Then on the threshold leapt, pour’d forth each dart,  
‘ And, sternly gazing, pierced Antinoüs’ heart,  
‘ And with sure aim, on all, the arrows shower’d,  
‘ Till all in heaps confusedly fell o’erpower’d.  
‘ ’Twas manifest, some god the avengers led,  
‘ As rush’d the victors where the suitors fled,  
‘ Rush’d, slaying them at will : dire rung the roar :  
‘ Head clash’d on head, the hall o’erflow’d with gore.  
‘ We perish’d thus, and in that reeking flood  
‘ Now lie neglected weltering in our blood  
‘ Within the palace. No domestic friend  
‘ Has heard the rumour of our hapless end,  
‘ None wash’d our wounds, and mourning o’er the bier  
‘ Gave the last honour to the dead—a tear.’

‘ Thrice bless’d,’ Atrides said, ‘ Laertes’ son,  
‘ Thou whose surpassing worth thy wife hast won.

‘ Thrice bless’d Icarius’ child, whose faithful mind  
‘ Ne’er the remembrance of her lord resign’d,  
‘ Her virgin youth’s loved lord : her deathless praise  
‘ Shall ne’er oblivion know in after days.  
‘ The gods the song of glory shall inspire,  
‘ And times unborn Penelope admire :  
‘ For not like Tyndarus’ daughter, versed in ill,  
‘ She dared her virgin youth’s clasp’d bridegroom kill.  
‘ A hateful song her outrage shall proclaim,  
‘ And virtuous wives share Clytemnestra’s shame.’

The spirits thus beneath earth’s peopled ground  
Their converse held in Hades’ gloom profound.  
Meantime, the king, his son, and either swain  
Pass’d from the city to the distant plain,  
Where old Laertes’ sweat manured the soil  
Bought by his wealth, and cultured by his toil.  
A shed ran round his house on every side,  
’Neath which the labourers that his wants supplied  
Eat, sat, and slept : and there a faithful crone,  
An aged Sicilian tended him alone.

‘ Go ye,’ Ulysses to his much loved son,  
And faithful followers thus his speech begun,  
‘ Enter the well built mansion, and prepare  
‘ The choicest swine to serve our evening fare :

‘ I haste to try my sire, and clearly learn  
‘ If, recognizing, me his eye discern,  
‘ Or if, year after year, so long apart,  
‘ I come unknown, nor move a father’s heart.’

Then bade them take his weapons—They obey’d,  
Nor lingering long without the mansion staid.  
The while the king, to try his sire intent,  
Down to his fruitful garden swiftly went :  
But there, within that orchard’s ample ground,  
Nor Dolius, nor his sons, nor servants found :  
They, where their father first had led them on,  
Gathering the thorns to fence the grove were gone.  
He saw in that well labour’d grove his sire  
Lone digging round a plant in mean attire,  
Patch’d here and there, and on his legs were bound  
Patch’d leathern greaves to ward the briar’s wound,  
And gloves on either hand to guard the thorn,  
And on his brow a goatskin covering borne ;  
Thus toil’d the woe worn man—thus clothed, thus view’d,  
When the son saw his sire by age subdued,  
He ’neath a lofty pear tree’s sheltering shade  
Stood, as the gushing tears adown him stray’d.  
Conflicting doubts his anxious heart possess’d,  
To run, to clasp, and kiss his father’s breast,

And his whole tale relate, or first enquire,  
And by the trial test his answering sire :  
This best beseem'd, by cutting speech to move,  
And thus, as one unknown, Laertes prove.  
On went the chief, while bending down his head,  
The sire dug round the plant, and clear'd its bed.

‘ Old man,’ he said, ‘ not thine the want of skill  
‘ The garden’s varying labours to fulfil,  
‘ Fair flourishes thy culture, all around  
‘ Nor plant, nor fig, nor vine, nor olive found,  
‘ Nor pear, nor bed uncultured, far or near ;  
‘ Yet—I must speak, nor thou indignant hear,  
‘ Thou solely art neglected, thus oppress’d  
‘ By time’s sore load, thus foul, thus vilely dress’d.  
‘ ’Tis not for sloth thou meet’st thy lord’s disgrace,  
‘ Thy form and stature mark no servile race,  
‘ Far rather like a king, who, laved and fed,  
‘ Presses, as age requires, a royal bed.  
‘ But answer truly what I now require,  
‘ Whose garden labourest thou for daily hire ?  
‘ And truly tell me what this stranger land,  
‘ If now indeed on Ithaca I stand,  
‘ As he, whom late I met, not over wise,  
‘ Told me, then hurried off in barbarous guise,



‘ Nor heard me as I ask’d, nor deign’d unfold  
‘ If living yet, or dead, my guest of old ;  
‘ For thou must know, that in my native earth  
‘ I entertain’d a man of foreign birth,  
‘ One more beloved by me than all the rest  
‘ Who to my hearth e’er came a welcome guest.  
‘ He said, that Ithaca’s high chiefs among,  
‘ His sire Laertes from Arcesias sprung.  
‘ Him to my hospitable home I bore,  
‘ And freely gave of my abundant store,  
‘ Seven talents beaming with elaborate gold,  
‘ A silver bowl round which wrought flowerets roll’d,  
‘ Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets richly dress’d,  
‘ Twelve beauteous robes, with each a radiant vest,  
‘ And four fair damsels, skill’d in every art,  
‘ Such as his choice had mark’d, and placed apart.’

His sire replied, big tears gush’d down the while,  
‘ Thy foot now treads on Ithaca’s famed isle :  
‘ But vile and scornful chiefs here hold their reign,  
‘ Where all thy countless gifts no welcome gain :  
‘ Hadst thou him living in his realm discern’d,  
‘ His hospitality had thine return’d,  
‘ All that thou gavest from thine abundant board,  
‘ And more than all his kindness had restored.



‘ But truly say, what interval has pass’d  
‘ Since thy inviting roof received him last,  
‘ Him, thy unhappy guest—my son—once mine,  
‘ Who lone has left me in life’s sad decline,  
‘ And from his friends and country far away,  
‘ To unknown monsters of the main a prey,  
‘ Or to the insatiate bird, and famish’d beast,  
‘ Gives, as they gorge, a momentary feast.  
‘ O’er him, the mother, on whose breast he slept,  
‘ Shrouding his corse, nor I, his sire, have wept,  
‘ Nor on the bed where her loved lord reposed,  
‘ Penelope’s last touch his eyelid closed,  
‘ Honouring the dead—yet truly now declare  
‘ Who art thou ? what thy race ? thy city where ?  
‘ Where moor’d the ship that brought thee and thy train ?  
‘ Or camest thou as a merchant o’er the main  
‘ In a hired vessel, and that convoy o’er,  
‘ Have they who here late bore thee, left the shore ?’

‘ Yes,’ he rejoin’d, ‘ my word shall truly speak  
‘ All that thy questions from a stranger seek :  
‘ From Alybas I came, o’er whose domain  
‘ My sire Apheidas holds ancestral reign,  
‘ Eperitus my name : some power above  
‘ Me here unwilling from Sicania drove.

‘ Far from the town my anchor bites the strand,  
‘ And, since Ulysses left my native land,  
‘ This the fifth year. Yet birds with omens fair  
‘ When joyful I dismiss’d him, wing’d the air,  
‘ And he too joy’d while hope illumed our breast,  
‘ Once more to reunite us, guest with guest.’

He spake : with grief’s dark cloud encompass’d round,  
Laertes grasp’d the dust that strow’d the ground,  
And on his forehead, deeply groaning, flung.  
Sore yearn’d Ulysses ; in his nostrils sprung  
The bitterness of passion as he flew,  
Kiss’d his hoar head, and round his father threw  
His clasping arms, and cried :

‘ ’Tis I, my sire !

‘ I am thy son, thy heart’s, thy soul’s desire.  
‘ I, twenty years now pass’d, my country hail :  
‘ Cease from vain tears, no more my loss bewail.  
‘ Hear—hear—haste urges—this avenging hand  
‘ Has ’neath our roof slain all that shameful band.’

‘ Art thou my son Ulysses,’ he replied,  
‘ Show me a sign in which I dare confide.’

‘ Lo ! to thy sight,’ he said, ‘ the scar display’d,  
‘ Where the boar gash’d me in Parnassus’ shade,

‘ When forth, by thee and by my mother sent,  
‘ I to Autolycus, her father, went,  
‘ His promised gifts to challenge. Further hear  
‘ While I the trees recount, all doubts to clear,  
‘ The trees, each one that in thy garden grew,  
‘ And as they blossom’d on my wistful view,  
‘ The while a boy I bounded at thy side,  
‘ I begg’d from thee, nor was my suit denied :  
‘ Thro’ these we pass’d, and thou each one didst name,  
‘ And badest me thirteen pears, ten apples claim,  
‘ Figs forty, and didst promise fifty vines  
‘ All duly planted in well order’d lines,  
‘ With grapes, all sorts, whence richest nectar flow’d  
‘ When Jove’s kind season bows the autumnal load.’

Laertes’ heart dissolved, his knees sunk down,  
Acknowledging the signs thus clearly shown :  
He clasp’d his neck, and swoon’d, with bliss oppress’d,  
While the son drew him closer to his breast :  
Then, as reviving sense once more return’d,  
Burst from his lip the words that inly burn’d :

‘ Father of heaven and earth, all-mighty Jove !  
‘ Yes, there are deities that dwell above,  
‘ Since the vile suitors by untimely death  
‘ Have paid the forfeit of their impious breath.

‘ But now my soul is sad, I greatly fear  
‘ Lest Ithaca’s throng’d sons assemble here,  
‘ And far and wide where’er the realms extend,  
‘ To Cephalonia’s race their heralds send.’

‘ Fear not,’ Ulysses to his sire replied,  
‘ Nor vainly vex thy soul—in me confide—  
‘ Now haste we to thy house, not far the way,  
‘ The banquet to enjoy without delay ;  
‘ My son and his brave friends I there foresent  
‘ All to prepare.’

Then forth they gladly went,  
Where his loved son and faithful comrades stood  
Tempering the wine, and cutting up the food.  
There to her lord the old Sicilian slave  
Came to anoint his limbs and freshly lave,  
Then richly robed, while Pallas standing near,  
Larger and loftier made each limb appear.  
Forth from the bath he stepp’d : the son amazed,  
As on a god upon his father gazed,  
Then thus exclaim’d :

‘ Some god has graced thy mien,  
‘ Sire, more than mortal, larger, loftier seen.’

‘Hear,’ he replied, ‘Jove, Pallas, Phœbus, hear!  
‘Would I had been as when, in youthful year,  
‘I proudly leading Cephalonia’s powers,  
‘Took Nericus, and all her stately towers.  
‘Such had I yesterday, beneath my roof,  
‘Been cased in armour for dire battle proof,  
‘Then hadst thou gladly view’d this vengeful hand,  
‘Bathed in the blood of that injurious band.’

While thus they conversed, from the toil released,  
They whose skill’d service had prepared the feast,  
Sat in due order on their station’d seat,  
And eagerly hung o’er the alluring meat;  
Then aged Dolius, and each labouring son  
Came from their day work, with long toil o’erdone,  
For the Sicilian dame who spread the board  
Had call’d them to the banquet of their lord,  
The kind Sicilian who his children fed,  
And tended hoar with age their father’s head.  
These, as they saw, and knew Ulysses, stood,  
Now entering, by amaze and awe subdued:  
But the king kindly hail’d them:—‘Time-worn sire!  
‘Draw nearer—cease to wonder and admire:  
‘Come, for tho’ wistful, each impatient guest  
‘Expecting your return, forbore the feast.’



He spake : with outstretch'd arms on Dolius press'd,  
Kiss'd his lord's hands, and fervently address'd :

‘ Since thou art thus, most loved, most honour'd lord,  
‘ Thus to our prayers, beyond all hope, restored,  
‘ Some god thy guide, be health, ye powers divine !  
‘ Bliss without bound, and heaven's high favour, thine.  
‘ Yet—tell me—knows the queen thy late return,  
‘ Or shall from us the blissful message learn ?’

‘ Old friend, 'tis all reveal'd,’ the king rejoin'd,  
‘ Not with such needless cares disturb thy mind.’

Thus spake the monarch, and resumed his seat,  
When Dolius' sons drew near their lord to greet,  
And gladly hail'd, and hung upon his hand,  
Then to their sire returning took their stand.

Thus they at feast : meanwhile fame's circling breath  
Throughout the city spread the suitor's death.  
All heard, and here and there, from every home,  
Gather'd, loud groaning, round Ulysses' dome,  
Drew forth, and tomb'd the dead, and o'er the main,  
Each to his native isle, convey'd the slain :  
Then sought the forum : and when all the place  
Was throng'd by Ithaca's lamenting race,

Eupithes rose, deep anguish rack'd his heart,  
For his loved son pierced by Ulysses' dart,  
His foremost victim : fast gush'd forth his tear  
Pouring his misery on the public ear :

‘ O friends ! what deeds this man has vilely wrought,  
‘ Who with our bravest race his vessels fraught,  
‘ Then all has lost, with all their numerous crew,  
‘ And now the chiefs of Cephalonia slew.  
‘ But haste—ere yet the murderer Pylos gain,  
‘ Or sacred Elis where the Epeians reign :  
‘ Haste—lest bow'd down by ignominious shame  
‘ Times yet to come with insult brand our name.  
‘ If we avenge not those that are no more,  
‘ Our sons, our brethren, life's last joy is o'er :  
‘ Ne'er may I breathe to curse another day.  
‘ Haste—ere his flight prevent our lingering way.’

He weeping spake : compassion fill'd each breast ;  
When Medon and the minstrel onward press'd,  
They rose from sleep ; they left Ulysses' hall,  
Stood in the midst, while wonder fell on all  
As thus the experienced Medon spake :

‘ Give ear,  
‘ Ye chiefs of Ithaca, attentive hear !

‘ Not without highest heaven’s consenting aid  
‘ The deed was done which I myself survey’d.  
‘ I witness’d—I myself—the present god  
‘ Who, mask’d like Mentor, nigh Ulysses trod,  
‘ At times, encouraging, before him pass’d,  
‘ At times strange horror on the suitors cast,  
‘ Wither’d their hearts, and chasing thro’ the hall  
‘ Beheld them, corse on corse, confusedly fall.’

Fear blanch’d their cheeks, and all their souls possess’d,  
When Halitherses thus the throng address’d :  
The time-graced hero, whose experienced mind  
The past and future equally combined.

‘ Hear Ithacensians ! from your baleful deeds,  
‘ From your own guilt this punishment proceeds :  
‘ Nor mine, nor Mentor’s counsel could persuade :  
‘ We bade you curb your sons : ye disobey’d.  
‘ They gorged the wealth, disgraced Ulysses’ wife,  
‘ And vainly deem’d the chief bereft of life.  
‘ ’Tis all accomplish’d : now obey my will,  
‘ Go not—nor heap by folly ill on ill.’

He spake—with wild uproar the assembly rose :  
Part, Halitherses, part, Eupithes, chose.

These rush'd to arms, and in bright brass array'd  
Before the spacious city firmly staid.  
Them, in his frenzy, fierce Eupithes led,  
Fired by rash vengeance for Antinoüs dead :  
He went, but ne'er return'd—death met him there,  
When Pallas thus to Jove preferr'd her prayer :

‘ Saturnius ! king of gods ! all-mighty sire !  
‘ Let thy loved child what thy intent enquire :  
‘ Wilst thou ’mid these that war and discord rage  
‘ Or mutual leagues their hearts in peace engage ?’

‘ Why dost thou ask, my child,’ the God rejoin’d,  
‘ Hast thou not, thou thyself, the whole design’d ?  
‘ That the avenger should the suitors slay—  
‘ Do as thou wilt : yet let Jove’s counsel sway—  
‘ Since great Ulysses has the wooers slain,  
‘ O’er the leagued kingdom let him justly reign.  
‘ We from their memory wholly will efface  
‘ How perish’d, bathed in blood, their kindred race :  
‘ So shall they mix in friendship as before,  
‘ And peace and plenty bless them evermore.’

That speech more ardent made Minerva’s breast  
As down she darted from Olympus’ crest.

The pleasures of the banquet now allay'd,  
Thus to his faithful friends Ulysses said :

‘ Go, mark if they approach’—And Dolius’ son  
To execute his bidding swiftly run.  
But on the threshold as he view’d them near,  
Stood, and exclaim’d :—‘ They haste, Ulysses! hear!—  
‘ Arm we!’—They arm’d—their monarch four defend :  
Six sons of Dolius on their sire attend—  
And Dolius, and Laertes, hoar with age,  
Their armour braced, thus forced the war to wage—  
And now when all in brazen splendour shone,  
They follow’d where Ulysses led them on.  
Nigh them, her voice like Mentor’s, such her frame,  
The virgin child of Jove, Minerva, came.  
Ulysses saw, joy swell’d his conscious breast,  
When thus the king Telemachus address’d :

‘ Now, thou shalt see, thou shalt thyself behold  
‘ Where clash in arms the boldest of the bold :  
‘ There shame thou not thy proud ancestral birth,  
‘ In strength and valour far renown’d o’er earth.’

‘ Thou too shalt see,’ Telemachus replied,  
‘ If such thy will, by thee this day descried,  
‘ If in the press of battle I disgrace  
‘ The matchless fame of thy illustrious race.’



Their ardour made Laertes' heart rejoice,  
And from his burning breast burst forth the voice :

‘ How bless’d a day, ye gods ! what transport mine :  
‘ The son and grandson of Arcesias’ line  
‘ For glory strive.’

Then Pallas standing near,  
‘ Son of Arcesias,’ cried, ‘ to me most dear,  
‘ To Jove, to Pallas pray, then bold advance  
‘ And wing dire death from thy long-shadowing lance.’

Then to Jove’s martial child Laertes pray’d,  
And strengthen’d by the Goddess’ guardian aid,  
Fierce—vibrated his lance : the weapon sped,  
And smote the casque that graced Eupithes’ head,  
But fail’d to guard : the point pass’d thro’ the wound,  
And o’er his fall far clang’d his arms around.  
The sire and son then rushing on the van  
With sword and spear wide strow’d them, man on man,  
And all had slain, had not Minerva’s shout  
Forbade, and stay’d them as they thinn’d the rout.

‘ Cease Ithacensians ! give the contest o’er,  
‘ That bloodless you may meet in peace once more.

At once confounding terrour seized on all,  
At once on earth their arms were heard to fall,  
At once, at Pallas' shout, with writhing dread  
They turn'd, and tow'rds the town for safety fled,  
While the king fiercely shouting in his might,  
Sprung like an eagle from the mountain height.  
Jove then in rage from his cloud-compass'd seat  
Hurl'd his fork'd bolt before Minerva's feet :  
Not reckless of the sign, the martial maid,—

‘ Son of Laertes,’ cried, ‘ be slaughter staid,  
‘ Nor Jove's dread wrath arouse.’

Ulysses heard,  
Rejoiced, and ceased obedient to her word.  
Minerva then, with Mentor's voice and mien,  
The solemn union bound their king and realm between.

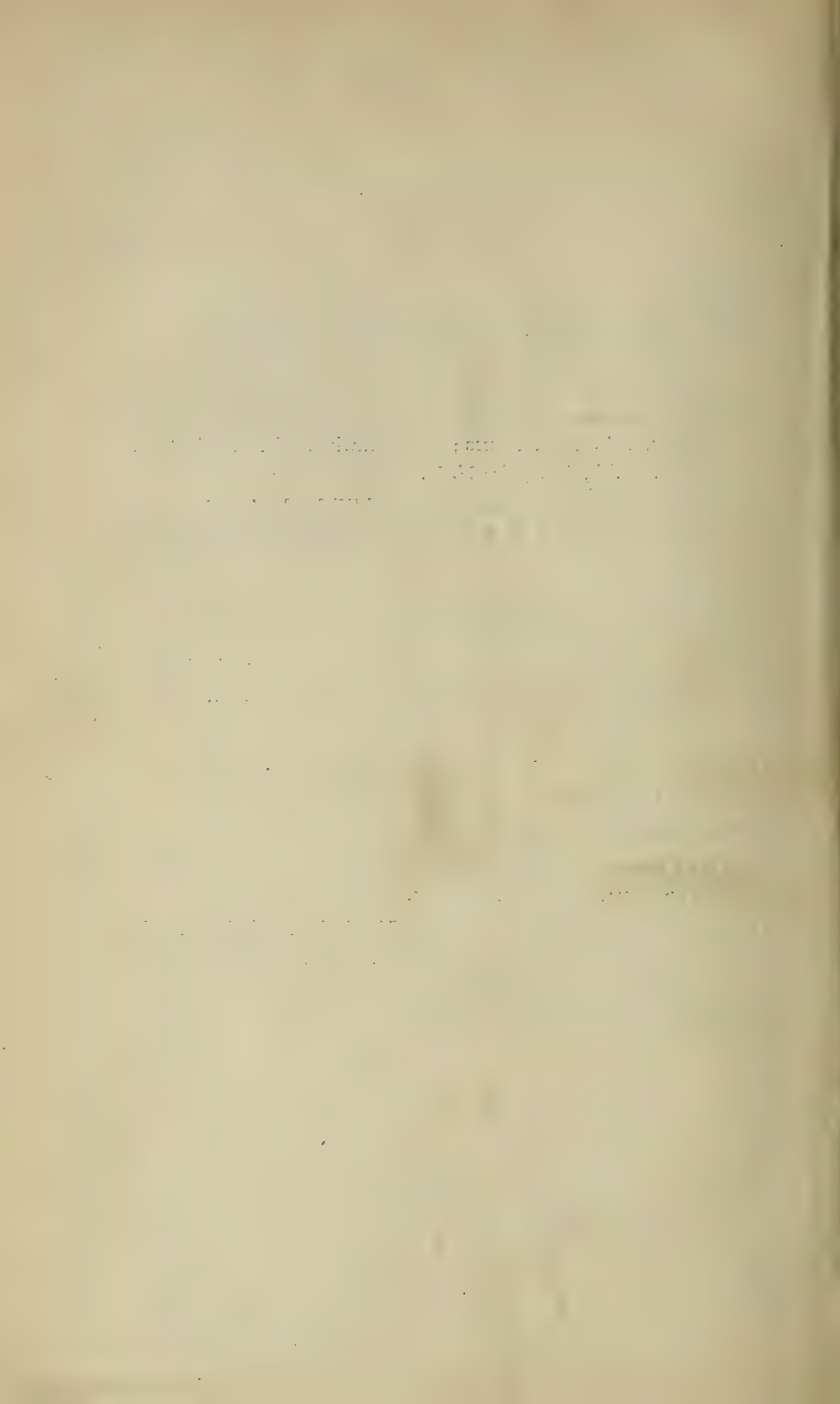
THE END OF THE ODYSSEY.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY W. NICOL, SHAKSPEARE PRESS, ST. JAMES'S.

## PUBLICATIONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

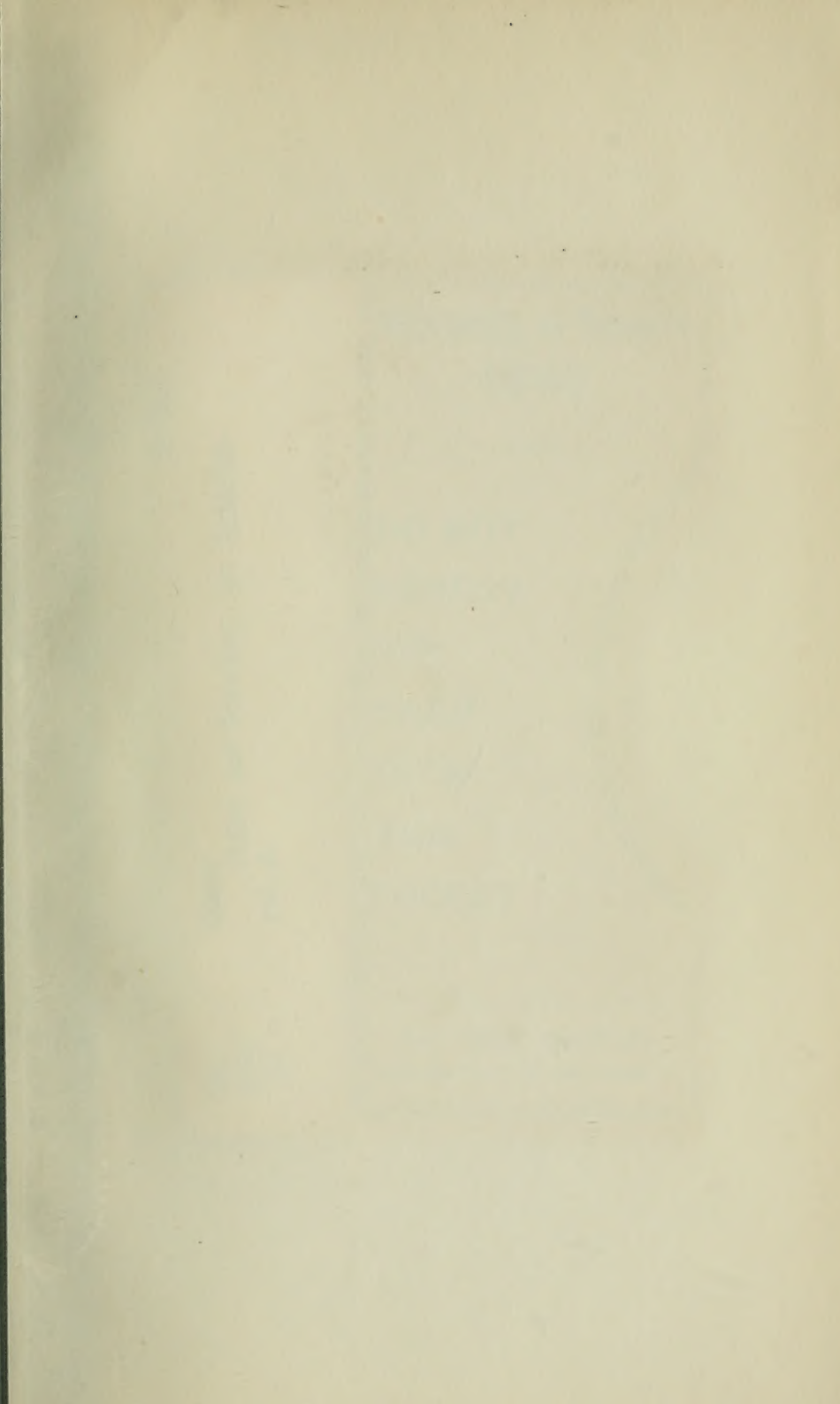
1. A TOUR THROUGH PARTS OF WALES, *Second Edition*; SONNETS, ODES, and OTHER POEMS; with Drawings taken on the Spot, by J. Smith, 4to. *price* 1l. 1s.
2. OBERON, a Poem, from the German of Wieland; *Third Edition*, elegantly printed in 2 vols. fc. 8vo. with engravings after Fuseli. 15s.
3. OBERON, or HUON DE BOURDEAUX; a MASK. Fc. 7s.
4. THE BATTLE OF THE NILE, a Poem. 2s. 6d.
5. A POETICAL EPISTLE TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, on the Encouragement of the British School of Painting. 2s. 6d.
6. SAUL, a Poem, in two parts. 18s.
7. CONSTANCE DE CASTILE. A Poem in Ten Cantos.
8. A SONG OF TRIUMPH.
9. THE GEORGICS OF VIRGIL. *Second Edition*.
10. FIVE TRAGEDIES:—[THE DEATH OF DARNLEY.—IVAN.—ZAMORIN AND ZAMA.—THE CONFESSION.—ORESTES.]
11. THE GEORGICS OF VIRGIL. With Metrical Translations in the Italian, Spanish, French, German, and English Languages. Edited by WILLIAM SOTHEY, Esq. Royal folio. 5l. 5s.
12. ITALY and OTHER POEMS. Fc. 8vo.

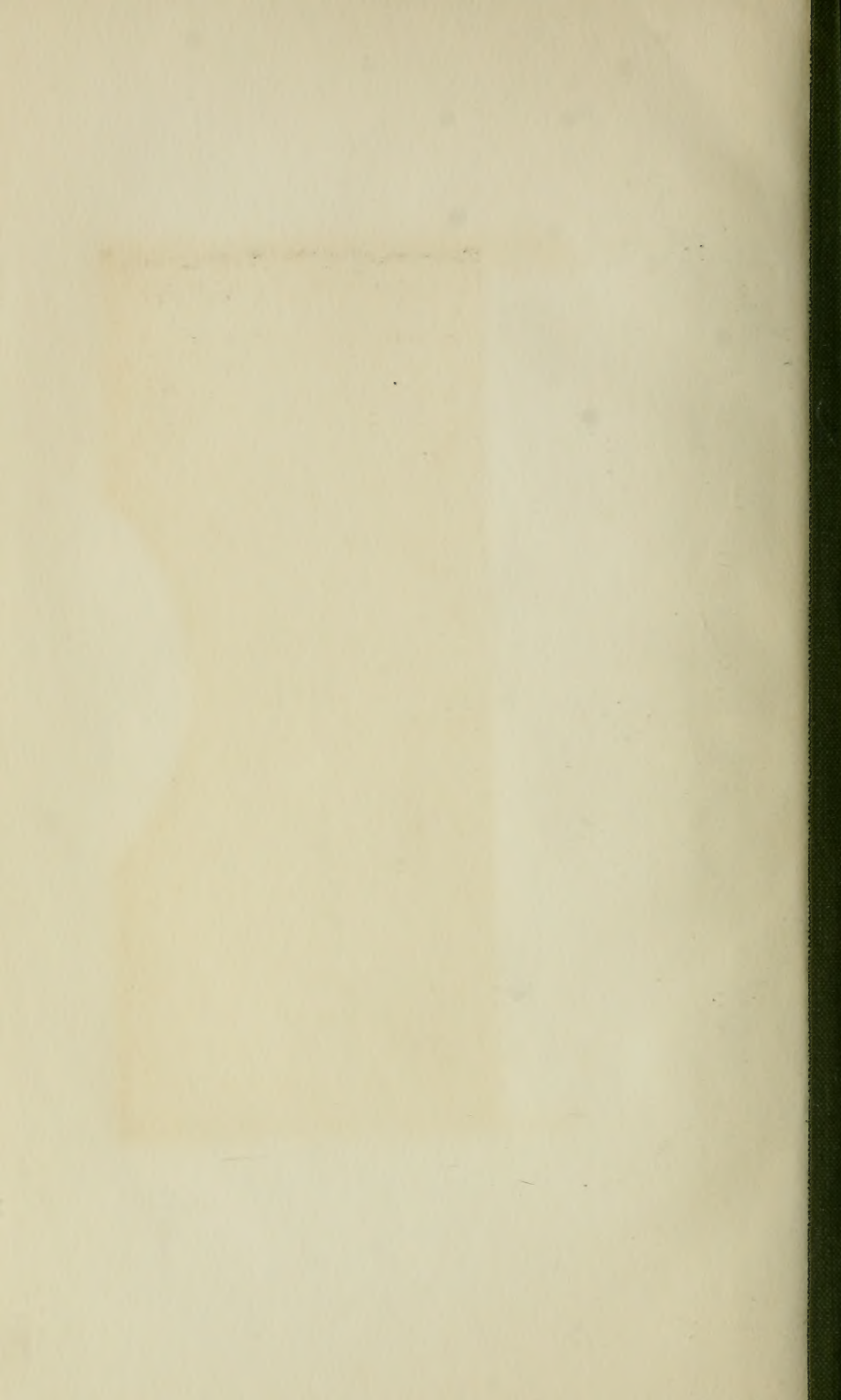












395094

Homer

Iliad and Odyssey; tr. Sotheby.

vol. 4.

LGr

H766

.E8

**University of Toronto  
Library**

**DO NOT  
REMOVE  
THE  
CARD  
FROM  
THIS  
POCKET**

Acme Library Card Pocket  
LOWE-MARTIN CO. LIMITED



